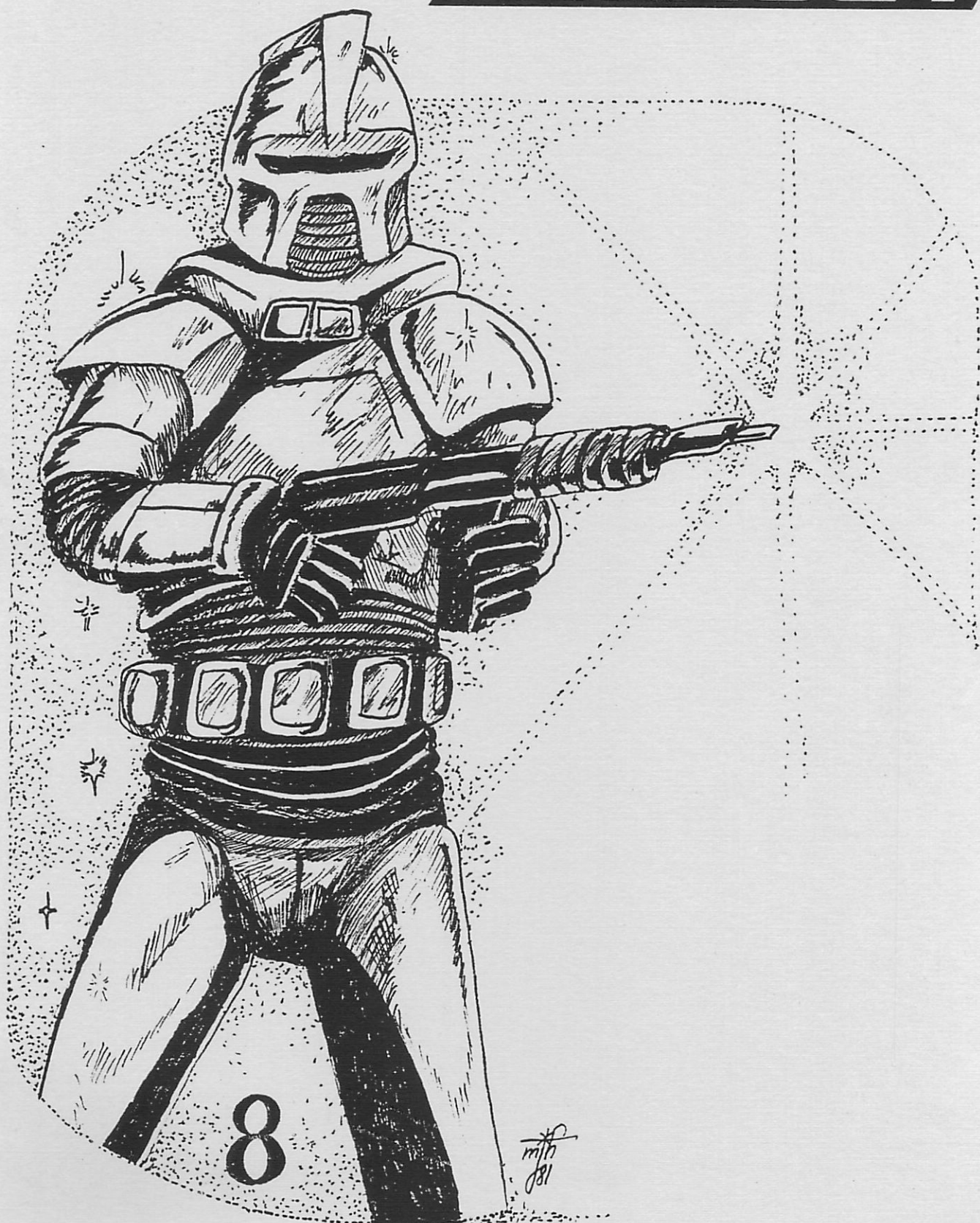


PURPLE & ORANGE?



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EPISODE GUIDE

The following is a list of all episodes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA that appeared on ABC network television during the 1978/79 television season, along with their broadcast dates.

9/17/78	"Battlestar GALACTICA"	1/28/79	"The Man with Nine Lives"
9/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I)	2/18/79	"Murder on the RISING STAR"
10/01/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II)	2/25/79	"Greetings from Earth"
10/08/78	"The Lost Warrior"	3/11/79	"Baltar's Escape"
10/15/78	"The Long Patrol"	3/18/79	"Experiment in Terra"
10/22/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I)	4/01/79	"Take the CELESTRA"
10/29/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II)	4/08/79	"Fire in Space" - repeat
11/12/78	"The Magnificent Warriors"	4/29/79	"The Hand of God"
11/19/78	"The Young Lords"	6/02/79	"The Living Legend" (Part I) - repeat
11/26/78	"The Living Legend" (Part I)	6/09/79	"The Living Legend" (Part II) - repeat
12/03/78	"The Living Legend" (Part II)	6/16/79	"The Young Lords" - repeat
12/17/78	"Fire in Space"	6/23/79	"The Long Patrol" - repeat
12/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat	7/07/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I) - repeat
12/31/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat	7/14/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II) - repeat
1/14/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I)	7/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat
1/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II)	7/28/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat
		8/04/79	"The Man with Nine Lives" - repeat

DREAMS OF A LONELY NIGHT

SHARON MONROE



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"Dreams of a Lonely Night"

(By Sharon Monroe)

Bone-weary as he was, Apollo couldn't sleep. The night seemed interminable. He sighed, wondering if there were some way he could force mind and body to rest.

Haunted. Was he forever to be haunted by his own memories? Would visions of the life he'd lost control of dog him until his dying day?

There was no peace, no rest for him.

"We've got to move on, Son."

His mother was right. Apollo forced himself to his feet. It wasn't safe here, wasn't safe anywhere on this planet. He had to get his mother to the Fleet. She'd be safe there. Until they reached the Fleet, they'd have to keep moving.

"This way, Mother."

Ila looked as weary as he felt. Apollo knew she had to be hiding much of her pain. She was already winded, hurting from the long flight from the Cylons. She was older, of slender frame, with less energy to spare for this ordeal.

Ila glanced about her, at the ruins of what had been her home, the place where she'd raised a family. They'd returned here to rest a few centons, Apollo and Ila, the son and the mother. Maybe they'd have time to escape before the Cylons returned.

Apollo reached out his hand to take his mother's. She smiled gratefully. He wished he could ease the tight pain in that smile. She looked to have aged years in the long night.

Soon, though, she'd be safe. Apollo would turn his mother over to the Commander, and Adama would care for his wife.

"Just a micron, Apollo. There are some things I have to take, just a few small momentos. I'll only be a centon."

He felt a foreboding, listened acutely for Cylons.

"Hurry, then."

She looked so weary. Staying low, she crossed the room, stooped over, keeping her head out of sight.

It wasn't low enough. Someone saw her. Apollo knew it a fraction of a micron before the Cylon blast came, the tiniest bit of time before he saw his mother's face contort with pain and incomprehension. Then she fell, no longer with any emotion, only death, in her eyes.

"Ila!"

Had that animal shriek come from his throat?

A hand on his arm kept him in the shadows, while a silver-haired man raced to the fallen woman's side. Apollo could only watch as that familiar man cradled his wife, could do nothing about the thousand emotions and memories crossing that face.

"Ila. I was never there when it mattered, never there."

The face was his, but not his. It was aged far beyond his yahrens, worn with cares he'd never known.

"I was never there, Ila, not even now, especially now." Adama mourned his fallen wife, while his son watched helplessly from the shadows.

Strangely, there was no second burst of fire to claim the old man's life. Apollo vowed there wouldn't be. Tears running down his face, he crept outside the broken walls, searching for the metal targets that might relieve his choking throat for a few centons. His sister was at his side immediately.

"Athena, I'd forgotten you were here."

"I have to be, Apollo."

They stepped forward into the street. There was nothing around them, nothing to relieve the desolation of the dead world. Apollo hoped his few untrained Warriors would be sufficient to protect the gathered survivors in the ships above them.

Two familiar faces loomed in the half-light. He strode over to join them, leaving Athena standing alone. His father and his wife waited for him, before entering the massive pyramid. Perhaps they'd find the key that would lead them to new hope and a new world.

He didn't question the world around him, or the faces that looked at him.

The three stepped cautiously through the empty stone corridors, past the carved pillars and fitted blocks. But there was nothing. There was no help here.

They'd have to look elsewhere. So they turned to leave and return to the light.

Serina smiled hope to him. He smiled back. Despite everything, as long as she was at his side, he'd find a way. She was life itself.

A shadow crossed his memory. Fear ripped through him. He pushed it aside, searching the area with his eyes, desperate. What sounded that inner alarm?

There! That metallic clang! They were being watched; he knew it. And he knew by whom. With a flash, he knew, too, who was in danger from the Cylons.

He was turning to Serina when it happened. She was still smiling as he tried to call out the warning that might save her. Then the smile was gone. Her lovely face molded itself into surprise, one hand reached behind her arching back, and she fell. He was kneeling over her in a micron, horror in his eyes, his mind numb of all but a scream.

"Look out, Apollo!"

He turned at the red-haired woman's plea. A Cylon was sighting on him!

"No! No, you bastard! Not again!" His own laser seemed to fire of its own volition, then again, and yet again.

Suddenly, he was alone. There were no more Cylons to shoot. He rose then, finally, to stare about him...

Adama and Athena weren't far from him. There was sorrow, love, pity in their eyes. They shared his feelings. He looked back to Serina. She smiled once more, then her eyes closed. He knew they'd never open again.

Pain. That was all he knew at the moment. He struggled to turn away, blind to all else.

He passed the red-haired woman as he ran, ignoring Adama and Athena as they called to him.

"This way, Apollo."

There was Sheba, calling to him. Did he dare answer? He halted, mind divided. If he answered, if he dared feel for her, he might lead the Cylons there. For now, she was safe.

Or was she? He ran, as fast as he could.

It wasn't fast enough. Her body lay still, warm in the sun, but lifeless. He touched her cheek gently, felt the numbness easing the pain in his heart. If he had come when she called, she might still live. His own vacillation had killed her as surely as the Cylons.

"Can you bring her body?" Starbuck asked gently.

That was the right thing to do. Apollo swallowed his tears, and nodded.

He knelt again over her blonde form, thinking of the love that would never be, wondering if he'd made a mistake in refusing to let himself care for her. But the others were dead...

Strange, her figure seemed pale, almost translucent. His fingers tried to touch her again as he tried to pick her up. There was nothing there. She seemed to melt away beneath his searching hands.

He drew back in horror as her body vanished completely. Sheba was gone. He was not even permitted the honour of her memory.

There was nothing but a pile of dust. This, the wind caught up, blew over him. The desolation in his soul grew. He was drowning in a sea of emotions he could not control, lost in fear and sorrow and agony that would give him no respite.

He leaped to his feet, ready to flee, if there were any escape from the haunting figures just beyond his sight. Athena pleaded with him as he brushed past her -- again.



"Please, Apollo! Help me. I need you, too. You're my brother! Please, help me!"

He heard the need in her voice, the fear, but the need in his own soul wouldn't let him stop. He ran from his sister, trying to run from his fears.

A hand caught his arm. He looked up from the ground he'd flung himself to. The red-head was there again, the one who'd warned him, the woman who watched over him and had been at the edge of his mind for as long as he could remember.

"Diana!" he whispered. Somehow, he could draw no comfort from her presence. He feared for her, feared he could give her nothing but dark eternity.

"Come, Apollo."

"No, you're not real! You're not here! Go away, while you still can!"

"I don't want to go away," was her quiet answer.

He pulled free, tried to run again. Somewhere in the flame and darkness, he lost her, left her behind. Then he let himself rest.

Her face floated into his mind, often; each time, he tried to shut her out.

"Please?" he whispered to the world that stared at him.

Find her, it told him. Quietly as it spoke, he knew he had to try, had to obey. He pulled his tired body to his feet, still weary, and began the search.

She was gone. Everywhere he looked, he found nothing. Every call mockingly echoed back to him. Where was she? He'd left her, and now she was gone. Gone, like all the rest.

Alone in the darkness, he let the tears flow. There was no peace for him, not anywhere. Everywhere he went, death followed, an ever-present threat. He brought sorrow to everyone he knew.

A small hand touched his.

"Why are you crying?"

He looked up again. The young red-haired girl looked at him seriously.

"Who are you?" he could only ask.

She smiled at him. "Ila."

"Ila?"

She nodded, then looked around her. "We'd better go, you know. The Cylons can't be far, and we don't want to lead them to the refuge."

"I know. Let's go."

He was on his feet again. He found the energy somewhere deep within himself to lead on, running through the small park. He had to stop several times for the

girl to rest. She was so young for this, far from a fully-trained, adult Warrior, though she always insisted she would be, some day. She could be quite the hellion, little Ila could. Some day, when she was grown...

He let his thoughts tumble away from him. They were there, almost to safety.

Now, only the last plain to cross, the last open stretch of grass to the space-drome. Then, aboard the ship, and they'd be gone, safe, beyond Cylon reach.

The young girl was looking about her frantically. He tried to get her to run with him.

"We have to hurry! We've got to get across before the Cylons come!"

"But Mother's not here!" the girl said.

"I'll go look for your mother when you're safe."

"No!"

He looked down into her face, the face that was so familiar to him. She reminded him of so many people. Young Ila had her mother's hair, her grandmother's smooth features, his eyes. She carried the marks of her family. Now, she might be all he had left.

"You've got to find Mother!"

"When you're safe."

"Don't you understand, Father? I'll never be safe. Not here, not there, not anywhere in this universe. I'll never even live if you don't find Mother. You'll never even know me!"

Then she faded away, misting into nothingness.

"No!" He was screaming again. "Not you! Not my daughter!" He raised his fist to the skies, cursing the Lords who took everything and everyone that meant anything to him, cursing the fate that made him the instrument of their deaths. He swore against life itself, wished he'd never been born, wished he'd done differently in his life, cried that he'd been unable to help any of them...

He was alone. He had to face that.

But still a voice wafted over the breeze.

"Find Mother!"

He stared wildly about him.

"You will not be alone forever!"

In despair, he laughed. There was madness in him, threatening all he was. He laughed again, screaming defiance at the world, the Cylons, death itself, while his tears ran freely. There was no reason to stop them, no reason to hope.

Unless...

"Diana?" he called to the winds. He thought, just for a micron, that he heard an answering cry, his name, in a voice from deep in his memory, from far away on the winds of space. He turned, unreasoning, insane hope flaring again.

Then the sirens sounded across the field. An alert! Cylon ships swooped low overhead.

His Viper was on the ship. He had to get to it, to answer the call for help his people sent out. Heart wrenching, he turned from Diana's voice, from her memory. He was needed here. Bitterly, he permitted thoughts of her to vanish like wisps of mist in the sun.

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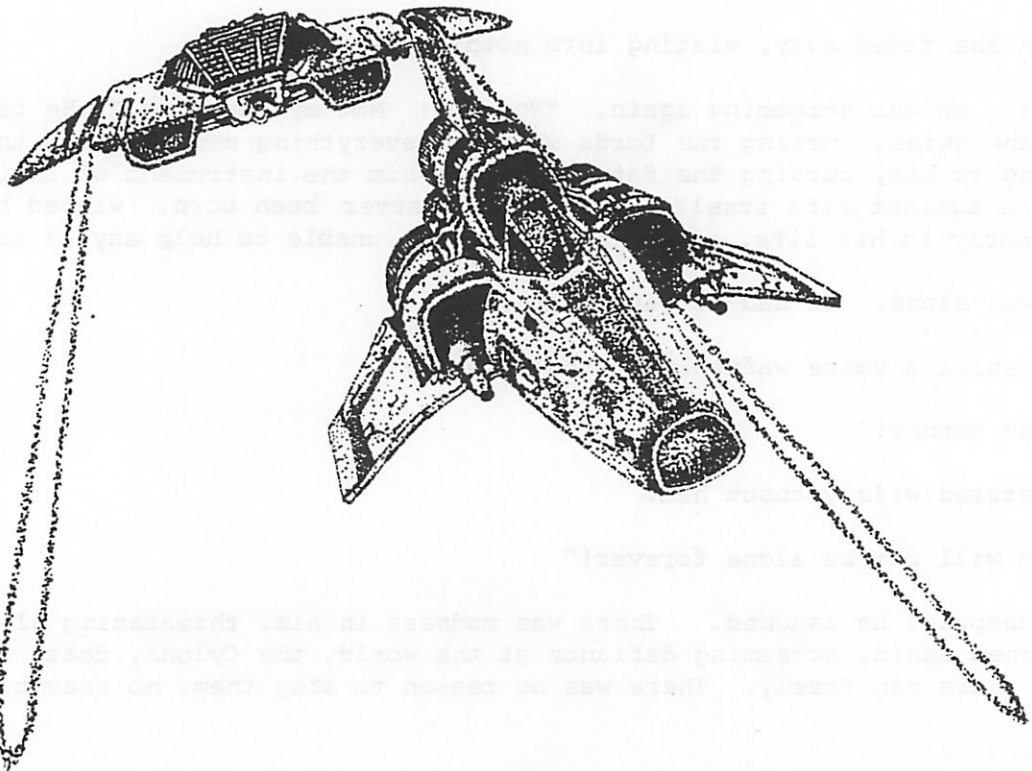
The alert was real. Apollo was halfway to the door of his quarters before he was truly awake. He found himself shivering, sick to his stomach, tears running down his face. He turned to the mirror, pulling on his uniform in easy, oft-practiced movements. His eyes were swollen and red, he noticed, as though he'd cried often in his dreams that night. He shook his head once more to clear it, dashed away the tears with a savage swipe of a towel.

He still looked sick, pale, haunted.

Well, when the alert was over, when the mission was through, he'd go to Life Centre. If he survived.

On an unseen breeze, his name echoed again, in a voice he could not quite place.

He swore to survive.





GUNNERY NOTES: FLIGHTS

(By Clyde Jones)

I should have been born a bird.

I believe I have been, in one of my past lives.

I love flight, the feel of the sky of any livable world, the wind in my borrowed wings, and the light of the stars in my eyes as I circle, swoop, and glide. I was born to feel the winds, to live them, to love them. I was born to dance the clouds down the sky, to glide between the worlds of the atmosphere and the islands of deep space. I live to fly.

Here, I'm perched like some scarred, damaged Kor-eagle in the top of the tallest tree in this wood. Flightless, in a physical sense.

I was asleep when I was hauled out of my den to accompany this concourse of madmen (and women). I was only half-awake as I was stuffed aboard the shuttle to take these people to a bit of "shore leave" on an olive-green and life-giving world.

I was down and staring at the trees and the groves before the full import of the mission sank into my fozzled brain. I was to stay here for a section or so to keep watch on these odd people -- keep them from being killed by their own pre-occupations, tend the camp, and fly the shuttle back post-haste if one of them managed to half-kill himself. All this was fed to me while I stood half-animate in the shuttle bay of the OSIRIS. Our loving Commander was quite specific about what to do and whom to watch.

Do? Help these nut cases to survive.

Whom to watch? All of them.

He intended to send Diana and Apollo here for R & R (and whatever their febrile little minds came up with). They were so distraught that he included Morgan to watch over them. Morgan, though, was showing signs of high stress about then, so another crewmember was added to watch him -- that lovely alien lady, Arzigal. Who was on the brink of terminal ingrown-mind herself.

Four out of four, needing help themselves.

So who gets picked to monitor these poor people? Me.

Gunnery sergeants are not supposed to be on baby-sitting duties.

We are supposed to tend guns. It says so in the fine print. We are there to see that all the armament goes "boom" or "zap" at the right time and in the right direction. Unfortunately, that fine print also says something about "ancillary duties as time and circumstances may warrant."

That seems to include herding the loonies around this green globe.

Fine. I like planets, for a rest. I love them. I love to fly over them in my little film-and-filament para-glider. Only one problem.

Those turkeys hurried me so much, I forgot the blasted thing.

A section here, without my wings! Cruel fate in the extreme. No one mentioned as I was leaving my cabin that I'd be here sitting on my hands most of the time. They forgot to mention how long I'd be here at all.

So all I grabbed was my standard survival pack and the large-bore laser rifle I "liberated" from a dying museum on one of the Colonies and tinkered back to usefulness. Makes our standard hand-weapons seem like candles. Doesn't fire for long, maybe, but it's got reach and power.

But I forgot the para-glider!

Ayeee...

So here I sit, watching the clouds, thinking my way up into them, mentally flitting and gliding, dodging sunbeams and hail.

Things could be worse.

It seems this world has a fine, large bird with a nice warm mind that is not too far from the Kor-eagles of now-vanished home. If I wait until the sun is right and the clouds glow with their fire, I'll find an ebon and silver shadow high overhead, glittering in the early sun. If I play my pipes in one of the older laments of forgetfulness and let my mind float as the tune is designed to allow, I can almost merge with that glistening shape. I can feel the sun on my/our pinions and the whir of the wind past my/our ears. I feel the rain misting my/our feathers and the currents buffeting my/our wings. I see the surface of the world as it was meant to be seen by me and the likes of me. Below -- far, soft layer of light and colour flowing beneath me, stirring and turning as I stir and turn, mere background for the real world of the air -- the true life of the darkling sky. My world. Our world.

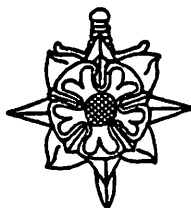
My own over-worked imagination? Most think so. I remember, though, on the eve of our second day, Arzigal commenting softly, and with a hint of the awe of the ship-born for anything of a living world, on the massive shape that sat with me for a time in the top of my tree -- an ebon and silver shape with mighty wings and cruel talons, sitting like an old friend and listening to the hymn of the pipes.

Who dreams, and who lives and walks a bigger world than most?

Sometimes it is difficult to say. I say not. I merely live, and try to allow others to live -- and perchance to dream.

My dream is of flight. And perhaps more than a dream.

I am content.



PURPLE ORANGE?

OSIRIS Publications proudly presents "Purple and Orange?" -- a fanzine devoted to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* and to what the GALACTICA* universe should have been -- and would ultimately have become.

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"Bereft"

(By Mary Jean Holmes)

I should have known from the moment he first mentioned the idea to me that Alix was getting us into trouble. It's not that my husband is the reckless sort -- I've always been the one with the knack for finding trouble, not him -- but when the job offer came along with the promise of much-needed money, I wasn't surprised to discover that he'd accepted without even asking if I approved.

"If you're going out in that death trap," I told him after he made the big announcement, "I'm going with you."

Alix isn't given to extreme displays of emotion, but the expression that crossed his thin face then was the most perfect exposition of shock I'd ever seen. "You? Oh, no, Kari, I'll have enough to worry about without you tagging along."

"Which is exactly why I'm going."

I can be very stubborn when I've a mind to, and Alix knew it. His frustration over that problem showed. "This isn't just another delivery run. It's going to be dangerous. How many times have I told you that? You know how critical every little detail can be when you're running off a minimum-usage power curve. If just one thing goes, you've had it."

I didn't really know that -- my occupations have usually centered on the arts, one reason we're often so penniless -- but he explained the physics of the matter to me so often I accepted the fact without understanding it. "That's why I don't want you to take the job," I answered, pushing an annoying bit of thin brown hair out of my nose. "You're a good enough pilot, but like you said, this isn't another delivery run. You're just not up to handling the experimental stuff."

"But the money...five thousand credits..."

"Sure, that's nice, but profit isn't everything, Alix. Who's going to pay up if the test fails? I don't want a company pension, I want a live husband."

Alix looked positively crestfallen. It's hard to argue with love, even when starvation is an unpleasant reality breathing over your shoulder. The pitiful, pleading look on his face might have made me giggle, if the matter hadn't been so serious. Death was too high a price to wager against a possible fortune.

"It's only the one flight," he pursued, trying to sound persuasive. "Just one jump from here to Tathine. It's a little dangerous, sure, but if it works, we won't have to worry about money for at least a year. And I'm sure I'll be able to find steady work by then."

I considered his words for a moment, staring at him. His emaciated appearance was not due to genuine starvation, I knew, but helped, nonetheless, to reinforce my anxiety over our very real penury. I sighed, then looked away. "If you've got to be a fool and take the risk, I can't stop you. But I am going with you, no matter what you say. You'll need a good navigator if the thing misjumps."

"Kari..."

"Alix, be reasonable. You know as well as I that you could pilot your way through a nova and come out without a scratch, or even a singed hair. But you couldn't find your way out of an empty docking bay if your life depended on it. And this time, it just might."

Alix glared at me. "Kari Shadowstar, there's no way I'm going to let you come along. The company'll provide me with a navigator."

"Those half-trained idiots couldn't do a damn thing without a pre-programmed course setting or a cruiser-sized navicomp. Most of 'em aren't even familiar with the most important starcharts. Besides, if you do get lost, I want to be with you..."

Alix's expression softened. "But, Kari, you're just an artist..." He'd realised what he'd said and abruptly fell silent; perhaps the scorching look I gave him helped. He knew just how I felt about the all-too-common, patronising attitude of the pilots on this world who regarded me as "just an artiste." Though I had all my credentials as a fully-trained navigator, there seemed to be something in many people's minds that prevented them from accepting as a crewmember an officer who also happens to paint and write music.

"I've done it before," I told my husband quietly, "and I'm damn good at it. It's in the blood, y'know." Neither of us really knew if that old superstition was indeed true, but, in my case, it seemed to be so often that we accepted it as fact. We always claimed that, between us, Alix and I made one exceptional pilot. Without his flying skills, I couldn't move the ship to its destination and, without me, he couldn't find his way. It worked out nicely; remembering the many times we'd successfully flown together made my husband concede now.

Three days later, we took off in a small, jury-rigged test ship designed to make the fuel-costly process of jumping to light speed cheaper by a factor of ten.. If it worked, it would be a boon to the firm that designed it, and a blessing to the smaller shipping concerns who couldn't afford to compete with the large companies in the interstellar trading market. But even though there was so much good to be had by the success of this venture, I couldn't help but feel from the moment I set foot on the ship that it should never have been allowed to leave the ground.

My father -- who was a darn good pilot as well as a superb musician -- told me anyone who's good at anything always puts trust in their gut feelings and listens to them without question. That was yet another superstition I was willing to buy only in part. Certainly I had moments when my instincts were right -- everybody does -- but more often than not, I tended to be dead wrong, sort of a backwards prescience. So, when I got this feeling of wrongness upon boarding that slap-dash ship, I took it as a sign that things would likely go well.

I should've listened to Dad.

Liftoff went smoothly; while I puttered with the course for Tathine, Alix took the craft off-planet. On the way out, we passed between two of the orbiting shipyards where starcruisers that would never touch a planetary atmosphere were built. It was a familiar sight to me, one that I'd seen on numerous flights to and from this, my homeworld. Nonetheless, I smiled in absent pleasure as I watched the tiny specks of space-suited creatures at work on a distant hull. It was the last thing I was to find pleasing for some time.

At the proper distance from that world we'd parted, Alix engaged the paralight drive. We both kept our fingers crossed. Without incident, the drive kicked in, space became a chaos of light, and we left my homeworld far behind in an instant. In unison, we heaved a sigh of relief.

"I told you," Alix crowed with a grin. "You worried for noth..." He fell silent as the ship shuddered delicately, then calmed. On one of the control boards, a couple of lights flickered. I blinked.

"What was that?"

Alix ran a quick visual check of the various readouts; a slight frown creased his face. "Nothing, I guess," he shrugged. "Just a bit of flux on the power lines. It's no problem; they told me we might run across this, because of the new utilisation curves on the drive."

I regarded my spouse somewhat sourly. "Why didn't you tell me about it?"

"You didn't ask. Besides, I know you, Kari. You'd only worry about it, and there's nothing to worry a..."

Again, the ship shuddered, but this time, the tremor persisted, fading with reluctance. Several of the indicator lights winked off, then on, then permanently off. I scowled.

"Nothing to worry about, huh? Are we going to have to put up with this all the way to Tathine?"

Alix attempted to sound nonchalant, but I could tell he was covering his own anxiety over this problem. "I don't think it's anything serious..."

Pandemonium broke loose then, with a fury unlike any I'd ever witnessed. The ship shook like a high-force landquake, creaking ominously; the lights on Alix's control boards were rapidly shifting from their normal, quiescent colours to forbidding red. The shrieks of warning signals echoed through the cockpit, making a harsh counterpoint to the moaning of the superstructure.

"What's going on?" I demanded, more than a touch fearfully.

Though Alix was quite talented at seeming calm, his imperturbable cool was obviously failing him. His hands were frantic as he tried to get a response from the disobedient controls; his voice was almost, but not quite, shrill. "I'm not sure. I think we had a short somewhere -- but it shouldn't have done this!"

I watched as I clung to my seat. The artificial gravity was doing funny things, and I was afraid I'd fly out of my chair and crash against the bulkhead, restraining straps or not. "Didn't you say that if one thing blew..."

"Yeah, but this was just a minor short..."

I nearly exploded. "Minor!"

Alix spared a moment to regard me apologetically. "Something's wrong in the power train," he continued, "and the problem's spreading. The main drive's going wild, and we're beginning to lose the gravitics."

I may not have known much about the physics of spacedrive, but I knew enough about the basic nature of these dual-drive ships to understand the true significance of the problem. A runaway supralight drive would eventually shut itself down to avoid a complete overload, provided the failsafe systems were still operative. But without the gravitics -- the primary source of the manoeuvring drive -- we couldn't land. It was that simple.

Shaking almost as badly as that damnable ship, I glanced at my own panels. If we were still on course, the navigation computer wasn't registering it. Set off, I assumed, by the malfunctions that plagued us, it was beginning to exhibit irregularities of its own. The misjump indicator flickered on and off, whether from actual misjump or not, I couldn't tell. I glared at the traitorous thing, taking a deep breath. "I don't know," I muttered. "I've got a..."

"Don't you dare!" Alix snapped tersely, terminating the overused quip before it left my mouth. I sighed, and looked once again at the navicomp.

Thinking that I might be able to coerce it back to normalcy, I got out of my seat and headed for the auxiliary controls, immediately forgetting the capricious nature of our on-board gravity. A violent systems tremor caused a sudden fluctuation in the gravitics; caught unawares, I lost my footing and collided -- head-first -- with the low ceiling. Instantly, things began to go black.

The last things I recall before my inner lights went out completely were the ship dropping unsteadily out of lightspeed, and Alix frantically stuffing me into the life-pod. Semi-conscious, I could hardly protest his action, but to this day I regret the fact that I couldn't fight back.

I've no idea how long I drifted in that life ship, no inkling of what happened to my husband or the ship. I remembered then only disjointed exclamations of Alix's over the rapid decay of the flight systems, cries more of disbelief than terror. Listless, I passed in and out of consciousness, watching, when I was awake, the endless sea of stars that my concussion-ridden head could make absolutely no sense of. I should have been able to determine my approximate position within a matter of hours, given the starcharts contained in the emergency kit and my familiarity with the stellar patterns; but, for some reason, I couldn't.

I reflected on this problem for quite a while, eventually recalling hazy words of Alix's: "...misguided power input...overdriven...misjump..." I blinked at the unfamiliar stars, then shut my eyes tightly against visual confirmation

of the grim conclusion my brain had reached. God, no, that can't be! This was one possibility I refused to accept, no matter what logic told me. My head injury was muddling my senses, confusing my memory, that was all.

For a long time -- perhaps days -- I waited for someone to respond to the automatic distress call. I consulted the very incomplete starcharts at my disposal, but to no avail. I listened to the atmospheric recycler suck in air and blow it out again, breatheable; when the nausea of my injury had passed, I felt my stomach grow tight with hunger, then numb, all the while waiting, waiting, waiting. Perhaps Alix would return, perhaps he'd reached Tathine, perhaps he was...

No, he isn't dead. I wouldn't believe that. Alix may be stranded, hopelessly lost, injured, but not dead. Never.

For the most part, I slept, trying to rid myself of the concussion that throbbed through my head. Generally, I would wake to stare out at the same unfamiliar starfield; then fall back to unconsciousness again. But once, I woke to find myself in motion. Confused, I peered out of the tiny viewport and was greeted by a sight that was at once welcome and distressing.

I was being towed -- by tractors, I assumed -- by several fin-winged, one-man ships that were occasionally propelled along by flickers of blue fire that looked, somehow, absurd. But, absurd or not, these odd craft were pulling me towards a ship that was as alien as they and the stars.

Slowly, the larger craft grew until it filled all my viewport. It was unlike any starship I'd ever seen before, even the weird constructs of non-humanoid cultures. It was more than a kilometre long, flat, tapered towards the prow, with identical appendages on either side, like the pontoons of an aquatic craft. It was incredibly huge, and I found its imposing peculiarity a bit frightening.

If the occupants of those vessels tried to contact me at that time, I was unaware of it. The life pod didn't come equipped with full communications gear, only the automatic beacon. As I was pulled along in silence, I began to recognise the pontoons as landing bays and, before long, my pod and I were manoeuvred safely into the starboard one.

I was eager to get out of that cramped prison, but not so eager that I couldn't wait to see just what I was up against. My head pounded mercilessly, threatening to terminate my awareness, but my stiff-necked determination to remain awake won out.

Before long, quite human-seeming beings emerged from the small ships and from areas beyond my line of sight. They were armed, obviously, but apparently amiable enough; the sensors aboard my pod indicated that the air they breathed was sufficiently akin to mine to support my life functions without a respirator or filter. Figuring I'd nothing to lose by getting out -- sooner or later, I'd die of starvation or thirst, if I didn't -- I emerged with caution. I prayed they were indeed friendly beings. If they weren't, the pod's little stungun and my poor marksmanship would be of no use against more powerful weapons.

As soon as I opened the hatch, my feelings of strangeness were further reinforced. The people, all of whom were dressed in identical tan clothing that had to be a uniform, babbled to themselves and at me in a language I couldn't understand. Not only did I find it unintelligible, but I couldn't recall ever having heard it. Since the nature of Alix's work as a free-lance pilot took us to many, many spaceports, I thought I'd heard just about every major tongue in the galaxy, and a hefty percentage of the minor ones and dialects.

I was willing to accept the possibility that I hadn't encountered this one, however. The universe is full of life, after all, and there might be a few species and cultures even a chronic space-goer might not encounter in his lifetime. I wished the pod came equipped with a translator, but that was really a very minor problem. The device was common enough in this crowded galaxy, and once we established the fact that a communications problem existed my rescuers would get one from their own stores. Surely a ship this large would have several.

I should've trusted in the infallibility of my backwards instincts this time. When I told them I couldn't understand, the people looked oddly at one another. One, a woman who'd just removed a strangely-shaped helmet to reveal a head of flaming red hair, stepped forward, a boxish device in one hand. She said something, waited a moment, then scowled at the unresponsive contraption.

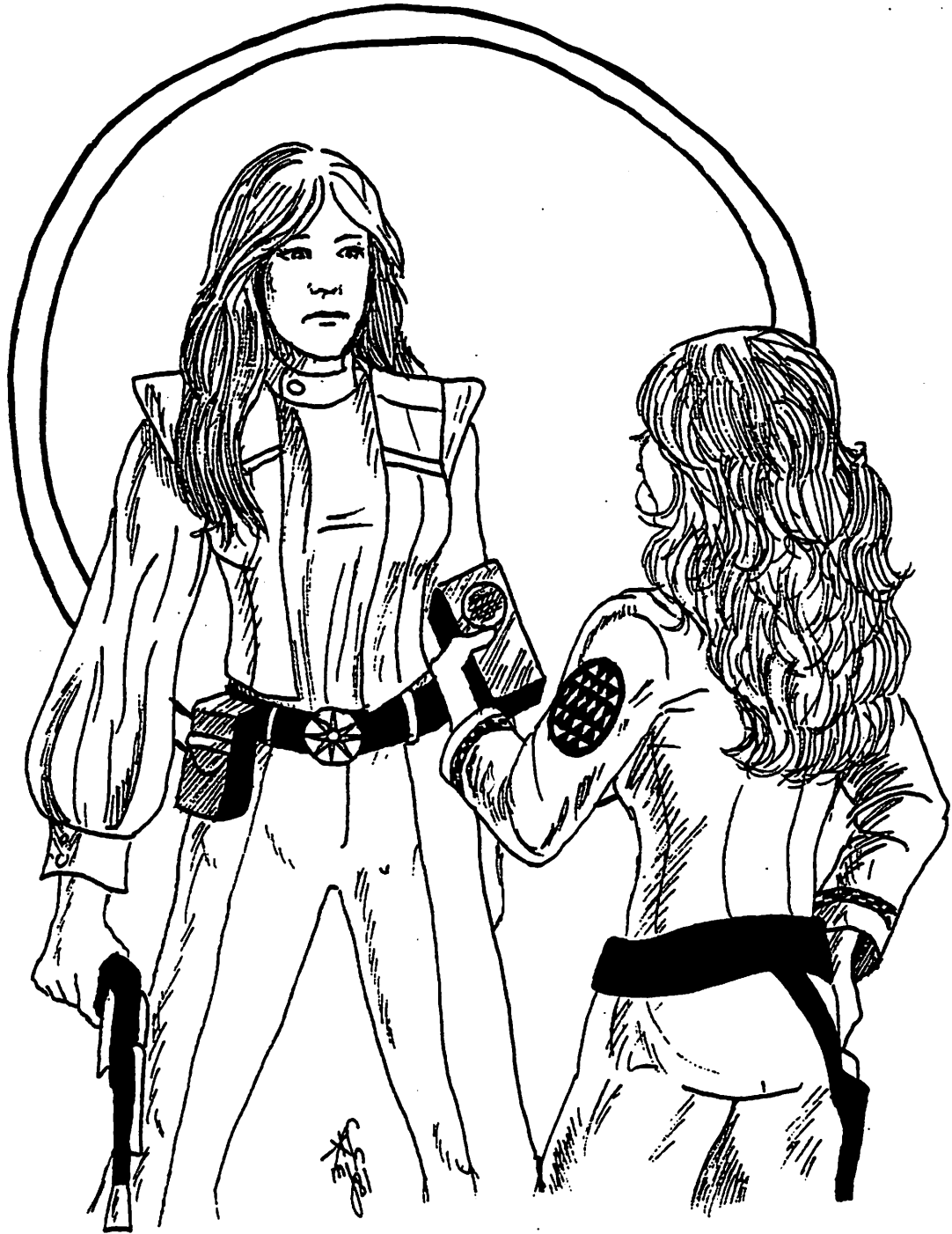
I assumed, from her repetition of the procedure, that the thing was their version of a translator; I also assumed, from the recurrence of her scowl, that the thing wasn't working. She looked up, then, and, for a moment, we stared at each other. The expression on her face made it plain she could comprehend me no more than I could her; evidently, she'd brought the device in anticipation of a communications problem. I guessed this was prompted by their inability to truly understand my pod's distress call.

After the moment had passed, she turned to her companions and snapped out a few orders. The instant compliance she received told me this person was an officer, well-respected, if not of considerable rank. She then faced me again, and gestured for me to follow.

I may be trusting and open-minded, but I'm not dumb. I shook my head vigorously, certain she'd understand that. It seemed she wanted to argue, but the momentary stubbornness on her face gave way to acceptance. I'm sure she wouldn't've been too eager to follow an utter stranger into a vast, unfamiliar ship, either.

Soon, a dark-haired youth appeared with a second box, which he handed to the redhead. She told him something softly as she fiddled with the device; he nodded, and strode off quickly. I was beginning to feel singularly uneasy, especially when the replacement device demonstrated no more success than the first. I frowned, and rubbed my aching temples while she snarled at the thing and shouted at someone across the wide bay.

I sighed. I could see from this impasse that we were going nowhere at light speed. Apparently the translators were not going to work, and without one, our communications problem would remain insolvable. We couldn't very well go about establishing a mutual understanding by pointing to things and giving them their names. That would take a terribly long time, and I was in a hurry to get home.



About then, a truly brilliant -- well, moderately bright -- idea came to me. While I was trying to come up with a way to get my notion across to the redhead, a tall, blond man appeared from behind one of the smaller ships, carrying what appeared to be instruments of writing. He handed them to the woman with a little smile; she passed them on to me.

I grinned. So, my brilliant idea wasn't so brilliant, after all. I may not have been able to give them a language lesson this way, but at least I could explain to them pictorially what had happened.

I expected them to be a bit confused -- pictures aren't always the best way to communicate a complex idea -- but their perplexity ran far deeper than I anticipated. The part about the systems failure and my ejection they understood well enough; it was the part about our destination and point of departure that had them stumped. They didn't seem particularly perspicuous of our method of travelling at light speed, either.

By this time, other people had gathered around us, a few in dark blue and silver variations of the same uniform. One, an older man, spoke to the redhead after examining my sketches. They weren't very good, I must admit, but I didn't like his tone of voice at all.

Watching them discuss my scribbles, I began to get uneasy feelings deep in my gut. Their confusion over my pictorial descriptions of the two worlds seemed to me to be more profound than it should have been. Things were beginning to piece themselves together inside my head, leading me again to the unacceptable conclusion I'd earlier dismissed.

Don't be an idiot, Kari, I told myself sternly. This blasted concussion's just making you nauseous. They'll figure things out.

Eventually, the older man in blue -- the commander, I assumed, from the deference he was shown by the others -- held out my drawings, indicated the two systems, and shook his head.

The meaning of the gesture was clear enough; they had no idea what worlds I was attempting to depict. That left me with a bit of a problem, but not much of one. They couldn't very well help me get back home if they didn't know where home was. I thought on that briefly, then ducked back into the pod to fetch the starcharts. That would surely solve the problem.

It didn't. After showing them the charts for both Tathine and my homeworld, not one of them showed the slightest comprehension. I quickly located the maps to several of the better-known star systems; again, I drew a complete blank.

Swallowing my growing sensations of dismay with a thick gulp, I flipped to the abridged charts for the Galactic Centre -- ones any navigator worth his position should have recognised, no matter how incomplete they were -- but that attempt proved just as futile as the others. Someone ran off with the charts after the officers examined them, presumably to check them against their own data, but I held little hope for that effort.

I was feeling quite sick inside, cold to my marrow, when the commander turned toward one of the tan-suited crewmen. I can't remember who it was, or even the gender, but a moment later, I began to see odd visions inside my head -- memories of twelve planets that were these people's homeworlds, silver-armoured things that were their ancient enemies, massive violence, planetwide destruction that all but decimated the humans as a race.

I attempted to swallow again, but found my throat dry with fear. It was as I first concluded, and somehow far worse. The failure of our experimental drive had flung us farther off course than we possibly could have anticipated. There was no such society as this in our entire thoroughly explored galaxy, which left but a single answer.

The drive of our ship, designed to provide maximum effect at minimum expenditure of energy, was inaccurately built. Far overpowered, the overload of the engines threw us off course -- not to the other side of the galaxy, but out of it entirely.

Dazed, once more feeling the persistent throb in my head, I collapsed against the secure reality of my life pod, not seeing the amazed faces of the people around me as whoever it was who'd touched my mind explained the gravity of the situation. I might have cried then, but the blackness that enveloped me obliterated any memories I might otherwise have had of the incident.

* * * * *

Things aren't quite so bad, now. Whatever else this ship might have, it certainly has a bunch of crack medics. They fixed up my head in no time, though they couldn't do a thing to fix this predicament I'm in. I'm getting used to it, however.

I've found that the redhead's name is Diana, that she's a captain on this ship, which is called the battlestar OSIRIS. They're on a search, trying to locate the rest of their people, who fled their homeworlds after the Cylon -- the silver things' -- invasion.

That's about all I've been able to really understand, so far, but I have a flair for languages, and expect things will improve before long. That boxish device was a translator, but for some reason, it won't work with me. Perhaps it's because of the differences between us.

And there are many differences, but some odd similarities as well. Who knows? Perhaps someone else from my side misjumped and landed here, stranded for good. It's not so ludicrous a thought. Humankind's been around and starborne long enough for such a thing to have happened more than once.

For the moment, however, I'm grateful that these people have accepted me so readily. Remaining with them will not only keep me alive, but mobile as well. I'm certain I was ejected after we dropped from lightspeed, so Alix must be here, too -- somewhere. I refuse to believe he's dead; some day, I'll find him, and together, we can repair that blasted ship and find a way back home.

This will have to suffice until then. If these people seem somewhat distant toward me at times, I can't blame them. I must be a real oddity, and a fairly

useless one at that. I've got to find something constructive to do on this ship before I go crazy.

Maybe they can use some sort of entertainment -- I doubt they've heard the songs of my galaxy before -- or a good navigator. I've gotten a peek at their nav-systems, and I'm sure I can show them a thing or two, once I've beaten this language problem. They may have ships bigger than any I've ever seen, and some other damned efficient equipment, but our navigation systems have theirs all beat to hell. And besides being a good navigator, I can't get lost.

That doesn't seem to matter right now, though. 'Cause even if that old adage is true, this is one Corellian that, for the moment, feels very, very lost. And very, very alone.

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Escape of the Pegasus

LEE GAUL

"Escape of the PEGASUS"

(By Lee Gaul)

"All squadrons, return to your home battlestar."

Major Electra banked her Viper in an easy curve to swing near the PEGASUS, waiting her turn as the other Vipers dropped into swift landings in the battlestar's bays. She watched the departing turbos of the GALACTICA's squadrons with some unease. She wouldn't admit it to anyone, but the three Cylon base stars ahead had her worried. Thank the Lords it was Cain in command! His plans always worked, and he'd pulled them out of worse situations.

Her turn. She dropped landing skids and hit her breaking turbos as the deck floated to meet her. Electra's ship stopped, and was rapidly shuttled aside to its launch tube.

"What's the story?" she called to Cicero.

"Refuel and rearm, fast as you can. Might be launching again."

That was Cicero, as few words as possible. Electra sighed and ran a quick check on her instruments as several techs swarmed over her ship.

Another centon, and she was ready for launch. Now, all she could do was wait. On either side of her, there were other pilots doing the same thing.

The launch bay seemed to shudder a bit.

"Wonder what's going on out there?" someone muttered.

"Don't know, Sergeant," was the answer, in a familiar voice. Orestes was Electra's brother. Major Electra and Captain Orestes had been the most successful strike team on their battlestar, until the battle of Molukai. They'd taken refuge with the survivors aboard the PEGASUS. Now, she was in Copper Keel Squadron, and her twin flew with Silver Spar. They were still the best.

They could feel the slight rumble that announced missiles launching. Electra looked cool, but one finger tapped nervously as she ran a last check on her instruments.

More missiles. What was going on out there?

* * * * *

"Yes!" Cain exulted, slapping his riding crop on the console. "Two down, only Baltar to go!"

"Sir," Tolan said worriedly, "we've taken some damage."

"How bad?"

"Doesn't appear to be serious, but it'll take a little time to repair. And I doubt Baltar will give us that time."

"Perfect! We'll move away, slowly, look worse off than we are. The worse Baltar thinks we're damaged, the faster he'll come for us. Without Raiders, our Vipers'll take him out like nothing! Alert our squadrons!"

Tolan released his pent breath. Commander Cain was one wily adaka! How could Baltar resist such a tempting piece of bait?

The answer? He couldn't.

* * * * *

There was ugly anticipation in Baltar's smile as he ordered his base star closer to the apparently helpless PEGASUS. Her sluggish motions would never carry her to safety.

"Ah, Cain," he cooed. "In the end, you're the fool. Sending your fighters to protect the Fleet, while you take me on three to one. We'll yet retrieve victory today. With you destroyed, we'll return to Gamoray and save the Imperious Leader. I may even end your precious GALACTICA, and that twice-damned Adama. Without your protection, I can pick off the Fleet as I choose. I may even spare some of them, for playthings of my whims."

Baltar gloated, not yet realising the PEGASUS was maintaining a respectable distance.

"By your leave, Baltar, but we will have to increase speed to catch the PEGASUS. She appears to be speeding up."

Baltar glared at Lucifer.

"Then increase speed! I want Cain's head!"

"Very well. By your command."

Baltar continued to watch his private scanner, irritated at Lucifer, gloriously expectant of a triumphant victory. He was beginning to feel annoyed at his Cylon crew. They were not closing on the battlestar. It was maintaining distance, though not leaving them behind.

"By your leave."

Baltar whirled on Lucifer.

"Reports from our Raiders indicate the passage of several squadrons of Vipers, and a number of shuttles. However, if we continue at our present rate of speed, our Raiders will not be able to catch up to us."

A horrible suspicion began to grow in Baltar's twisted mind. Several squadrons of Vipers? Not many squadrons? Could Cain still have ships and pilots? If so, and their own defensive squadrons couldn't catch up...

No! Cain was doing it again!

"Retreat!" Baltar roared.

"But the PEGASUS..."

"Damn the PEGASUS! Damn Cain! Damn the whole human Fleet!"

"Baltar, sir?"

"Get us out of here before she turns on us! She still has fighters, and we don't!"

"By your..."

"Get out of here, and sound retreat!"

Lucifer bowed rapidly out of the scanner room.

Rage and fear played on Baltar's face. He breathed heavily, pounding his fist on the metal wall, face twisted.

"Cain, you don't know how I hate you!"

* * * * *

Commander Cain was understandably annoyed at Baltar's eluding his trap, but he shrugged his shoulders and turned his mind to other matters. He studied the faces of the officers at the briefing.

Colonel Kleopatra, his second-in-command since Molukai -- a short, slender black woman, the best Executive Officer a Commander could ask for. There was a lot of knowledge and skill in her.

Major Cicero, the Master Mechanic -- a man of few words, he could double as an Engineer at a micron's notice, but his primary purpose in life was to keep Vipers flying.

Major Sherlock, Engineering Chief. His most valuable quality was a mind that could absorb anything. He knew everything there was to know about the PEGASUS. His piercing black eyes glittered when he was alert, which seemed to be constantly.

Captain Graham, supply officer -- a short, cheerful, pudgy individual, almost unflappable.

Major Electra, his newly appointed Flight Commander -- tall, tawny-golden, stormy-eyed and drawing eyes. She was one of the best on a ship full of the best. He knew, too, that she was deeper than the easy smiles she constantly wore.

Lieutenant Tolan, his aide, general assistant, and bridge officer. Some day, he'd make a fine commander, with Cain training him.

"Well," Cain said crisply, rising to his feet.

Talk subsided, and every eye turned to him.

"How are repairs coming along?"

"Done."

"Well, that's concise, I'll admit, Cicero. Anybody care to elaborate?"

Major Sherlock made the report. "Engineering completely functional again. Structural damage on Alpha, Gamma, and Epsilon Decks, all sections repaired. One fuel tank ruptured; we lost fuel, but fortunately, it didn't explode. The hole has been patched. Basically, we're spaceworthy again." The tall, thin man sat down again.

"Sir?"

"Graham?"

"Repairs used a great deal of our extra supplies, metal, sealing materials, and such. If possible, I'd recommend we pick up more before any long voyage."

Cain nodded, a slight frown furrowing his brow, as he considered.

The door opened, and a silver-blond woman slipped into a chair at the table.

"Dr. Helena. Welcome. Our ship's in good shape. How's the crew?"

"With the reduced medical staff you left me, we've done a good job. Six dead, two still in serious condition. The rest will be fine. How long until I get my people back?"

"Maybe quite some time."

Puzzled glances fixed on him. Helena's question was one Cain hoped to answer in his own time; he'd planned to explain his decision when he made the announcement. Now would have to suffice.

"We're not returning to the Fleet. At least, not yet."

Blank astonishment showed on several faces. His other officers broke into a babble of questions and complaints.

He raised his riding crop. All ears and eyes locked on the Commander.

"We have another job to do."

"But the Fleet needs us! They need you!" exclaimed Tolan.

"And we need them!" broke in Dr. Helena.

"Yes, the Fleet needs us. But not the way you're thinking. Commander Adama made it clear the Cylons have been tagging him all along. His Fleet can't make light-speed. He hasn't had the chance to really give those gollmonging tinheads the slip. We're going to give him that chance. If I know Baltar, he's going to try to get us. The Cylons in this quadrant are out for human blood. They want a target.

"We're going to be that target. We're faster than they are; we're better pilots; and we're going to be fighting in ways they'll never understand. We're going to be the bait, the lure that'll keep the Cylons off Adama's trail long enough for our people to escape. We'll decoy the Cylons, tease them along, then disappear."

Cain looked around his group. Several still looked stunned. Sherlock wore a slight smile; he understood. Electra looked confident. Tolan, his aide, was standing very tall, looking inspired.

"We'll give Adama all the time we can, any way we can. With our lives, if that's what's needed. But I don't think it'll be necessary. We're too good. We'll leave the Cylons in a tangled mess, then slip away. We'll always be between the Fleet and the enemy. Anybody here who can't deal with that?"

There was silence. His finest officers digested the idea.

"Anybody here think your departments can't deal with it?"

Nobody raised a hand or opened a mouth.

"Good. If there are any questions, feel free to bring them to me. For now, inform your people of our assignment. Dismissed. Oh, Electra, I want to see your squadron assignments."

In a centon, the room was empty of milling officers except for Commander Cain and Major Electra.

"I've consolidated the squadrons, to make best use of our pilots and ships. Three squadrons. Captain Elaine retains Copper Keel. Captain Heimdal has Bronze Wing. Captain Orestes is in charge of Silver Spar. Will those be satisfactory, sir?"

"Fine, fine." Cain was pacing the room.

"Is there perhaps another reason we aren't returning to the Fleet after giving the Cylons the slip, Commander?"

Cain frowned, then had to laugh a little. "You're observant, I'll grant you. Adama and I have been friends for yanrens. We just have different ideas on how best to run the Fleet. This way, we both do what we do best. I'll guard the Fleet as I see it, from the outside, a fast military strike force. Adama will be the inner guard, our wisdom, leading our people on to safety."

He sat down, trying not to remember two women left behind with that Fleet.

Electra nodded. "I understand. What will our first action be?"

"You heard Sherlock. We're low on fuel, thanks to some sharp-shooting Cylon. We'll have to hit Gamoray again, to stock up for a lot of dodging and a long trip."

Electra chuckled. "We're going to teach those Cylons the meaning of paranoid."



"That we are, my girl, that we are. . Strange, there was a Warrior in Captain Apollo's squadron, reminded me of you and your brother. Hmm, let's see those assignments."

She smiled and handed him a computer roster sheet.

* * * * *

The attack on Gamoray went completely as planned. Still reeling from a Colonial attack a mere section earlier, the Cylons were again taken totally un-awares. Cain did what he did best -- struck without warning, took what he wanted, then vanished among the stars.

Surveying the damage later, a very weary Imperious Leader wasn't sure whether to call for an all-out hunt for the maddeningly elusive Cain, or to simply bid him good riddance and hope he was gone for good.

Aboard the PEGASUS, elated Warriors toasted yet another victory.

"For Sheba"

(By Anne Cecil)

No one ever had a daughter bolder,
Swifter, stronger, smarter, more aggressive --
Skilled at all, and rated quite impressive;
People always guessed me as much older.
No one ever led a squadron tougher;
Aping me, they all performed like wonders,
Logging missions without any blunders,
Getting sharper as the fight got rougher.
No one ever fought the Cylons meaner;
Warriors twice my age killed lesser numbers.
Often I have chased them through my slumbers,
Winning through to make the starlanes cleaner.
Triumphs, leaving me alone dejected --
He's entranced by softness I've rejected.

IT AIN'T

MY



BIRFDAY !

"It Ain't My Birfday"

(By Ben Thomas)

Major Jason placed the glass on the counter and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. Mmm, that was nice! He gazed at the glass fondly. It was possibly the best batch he'd made yet. But that was only logical -- a master could only get better and better.

He looked around the empty room. Where was everyone, anyway? What a time for them to be elsewhere!

Well, if there was no one here to taste his brew, he'd just have to take the brew to them. He took the flask that lay at the bottom of his still -- the flask that collected the dripping, green-coloured liqueur -- and shakily rose to his feet. He swayed across the room and into the empty corridor. Just where was everyone, anyway?

Ready room. There was always someone in the ready room.

There was. At a corner table, Jason found a cluster of pilots from Purple Squadron. "Hi, guys!"

Arion looked up and groaned. "Uh-oh.. Look what the Major has."

"Midori!" cried Trav. "Get away from me with that stuff!" Everyone knew how low Trav's tolerance for alcohol was.

"What do you mean, get away?" Jason asked. "What's wrong with this? You haven't even tasted it yet."

"We don't care to," said Mara.

"Yes, Major. We remember what happened to us the last time you gave us that stuff," Periander moaned.

"We didn't sober up for a section," added Alexandra.

"We wound up drunk while on patrol, then met up with Cylons," Arion contributed.

"But you still beat 'em," Jason protested.

"Yeah, but we sure must've confused them when we came into battle upside down, backwards, and even sideways," Mara replied.

"Now, stop it," said Jason as he pulled up a chair. He missed it, and nearly sat on the floor. "You really have to taste this!"

"Not me, no way, no way..." Arion jumped up from his chair. "I just remembered, I'm on duty in a centar. See ya later."

"And I'm on duty in twelve centars," came the voice of the vanishing Trav.

"Wait for me!" Mara called, dashing after them.

"Jason," sighed Alexandra, "I like you, a lot. But..."

"How 'bout you, Periander?"

Lieutenant Periander just smiled and slowly pushed back his chair. "I may be a little crazy, Major, but I'm not insane." He disappeared in the same direction the others had taken, bumping into several Warriors on their way in. "Take my advice, guys," he told them. "Run!"

Jason shook his head sadly. "What's wrong with everyone?" He took a swig from the flask. "Why don't they want some of this stuff?" It really was good. No, the Warriors couldn't do without this brew. If they wouldn't taste it voluntarily, then...

Jason smiled.

* * * * *

Arion peeked around the door frame and surveyed the ready room. The Major wasn't there. "It's safe," he called to the others.

Trav, Alexandra, Periander, and Mara followed him to the table they'd occupied only half a centar before. "Whew," sighed Periander. "Now I really could use a drink!"

"You mean you trust Major Jason?" Trav asked.

"Trust him?"

Alexandra knew what Trav meant. "Periander, Jason was here, and there aren't any sloshed Warriors lying around. He must've gotten rid of that concoction somewhere."

"Uh-huh. I suggest we lay off the hard stuff. He could've spiked anything."

"Trav," Arion muttered, "I wouldn't suggest you ever drink any of the hard stuff."

Trav just scowled. "I'm thirsty." She went to the soft drink dispenser, dialed a drink, and returned with a glass. She stuck out her tongue at it, then took a long swallow.

"That's not such a bad idea," Alexandra commented. "After all, Arion, you are on patrol in thirty centons."

"Sure. Anybody else want anything?" He received the expected answer and juggled the three glasses, plus Trav's second, back to the table.

Trav smiled happily. "Ya know, dish soda's not haf bad."

"You okay?" Alexandra asked.

"Sure!" Trav began to giggle.

"See!" Arion exclaimed. "She can get drunk on anything!"

"I is not drunk!" Trav snapped.

"You know, she's not far off," Mara observed.

"Huh?"

"This soda isn't half bad!"

They each took a sip.

"Hmm, it isn't," Alexandra commented. "I wonder what new flavour Sergeant Thon's added to our menu this time."

They all staggered to the drink dispenser -- except Trav.

"I don't see anything new," said Periander. "Which of these did you get us, Arion?"

"Why, this one." Arion pointed to a button.

"That's not new. Let's try another glass." Alexandra pressed a button. No one noticed Trav slowly slip from her chair and onto the floor.

"I guess," Arion said, getting each of them a third glass, "that Thon just didn't have time to change the lable on the machine." He downed the drink and plopped ungracefully to the floor beside the humming Mara.

"Happy birthday!" she said.

"But it ain't my birfday," Arion protested. "Is it yours, Alexandra?"

There was no answer.

"Alexandra? Alexandra? Alex?"

A centar later, an angry Colonel Arsenaux strode into the ready room. "There you are, Sergeant. Get off that floor; you're late for patrol." He looked at the slumbering Warriors. "Sergeant Arion, get up! Right now! Sergeant!"

Arion looked up very slowly and smiled. "Hi!" Then his head fell forward, and no amount of shaking on Arsenaux's part could rouse him again.

The Colonel picked up one of the many empty soft drink containers that littered the floor and sniffed at it. There was a familiar smell, one he wasn't able to place at first. Then...

"Frak!" he exclaimed in sudden recognition. "Midori! Jason!"

A head appeared from behind the dispenser. "Colonel? You called?" Jason stepped into the open and spread his arms innocently, then took two more steps and collapsed, neatly and precisely, to lie at attention at Arsenaux's feet.

PERSONAL LOG - FLIGHT SERGEANT MARA

(Voice code retrieval only -- visual display mode)

Well, I've mended my uniform, polished my boots five times, polished my helmet three times, checked out my Viper more times than I remember, and invented eleven variations on solitary pyramid. There's no one to talk to but myself, so I may as well say something useful.

To go back to the beginning, I was down in the landing bay when a pilot coming in -- I don't know who -- lost control and crashed. I was handy, so I ran over to see what I could do to help. As I neared the Viper, there was a tremendous explosion which hurled me backwards. And that's all I remember.

When I woke in Life Centre, a med tech (Lavanna, I think) was talking to Captain Diana and Lieutenant Ariella. She must have been talking very softly, because I couldn't hear her voice over the pounding in my head. I fell asleep again before I had a chance to say anything.

I'm told I drifted in and out for about three days. I don't remember any of it. When I finally woke, Ariella was sitting by my bed. She smiled at me and said something. I don't know what she said; her lips were moving, but nothing came out. I asked her to speak up, and suddenly realised I wasn't making any sound either. Or rather, I couldn't hear any sound. I could tell by her expression that Ariella was shouting at me, but I couldn't hear a thing. It suddenly sank in that I was totally deaf. Then I started shouting. A med tech came running and gave me something, and I slept again.

This time, when I woke it was Lavanna by my bed. Her concerned expression clearly asked how I felt. Outside of a throbbing head and some dizziness, I felt fine. But when I told her this, I was reminded of my other problem. I still couldn't hear. I asked her if the deafness was permanent, and she just gave an elaborate shrug. By writing it out, she explained to me that my close proximity to the explosion had given me a severe concussion, and apparently also damaged my hearing. Nothing seemed to be physically wrong, so they'd just wait and see if my hearing came back. If it didn't in a couple of sections, there was an operation they could try. But first, they'd see if it cleared up on its own. Reference to the crash reminded me of something else, and I asked her what happened to the pilot. She pointed to a bed on the far side of the room, where a blanketed figure lay sleeping. Thank the Lords for that much!

In the next several days, they tested my hearing in every way imaginable, but the answer was still the same -- wait and see. The headache was gone, and I didn't feel too dizzy any more. That is, until I tried getting out of bed. I went flat on my face. I felt like the ship was pulling every evasive manoeuvre in the book. Lavanna assured me it wasn't, and explained, again by writing, that hearing and balance are very closely linked. Great! Now, I not only can't hear, I also can't walk without reeling like a drunk!

A couple of days later, they finally released me from Life Centre. My balance still wasn't perfect, but at least I could stay on my feet. I could even walk a straight line if I half-leaned against the wall.

When I got back to the pilots' quarters, I was almost glad I couldn't hear. From the reactions I got, I could tell many jokes were being made about my unsteady gait. Ariella hurried over to help me to my bunk, but I pushed her away. I was angry and frustrated, and I'd had enough coddling in Life Centre. I flopped down on my bunk with my back to them, and they went back to what they were doing.

The next several days were rough. People tried talking to me, but writing notes gets cumbersome. Many of them finally gave up. Pandora invited me to join a pyramid game. I never played pyramid very much in the past, especially against her, because I wasn't very good at it, but I was bored enough to be desperate. After a couple of hands, I gave up. Everybody meant well, I'm sure, but it just kept reminding me I was deaf, and if it turned out to be permanent, I was probably through as a pilot.

I think that's what worried me most. I lived to fly. Take that away, and I saw no reason to be a Warrior any more. I suppose I could become a shuttle pilot, where my co-pilot would handle the com-line. But after piloting a Viper, that was about as thrilling as piloting the cross-city commuter shuttle. My faulty balance prevented me from flying anything, but mostly it was the com-line that stood in my way. If my balance improved, as it seemed to be doing, the only thing keeping me from flying was the fact that I couldn't communicate with the bridge or with my fellow pilots. I could never fly long-range patrol; if I ran into anything, how would I know if my report got through? How could I receive orders on what action to take? And in battle you're receiving instructions from your squadron leader, dividing up who's going after which ship, being warned there's a Cylon on your tail, etc. Communications is vital. It's no place for a deaf pilot. That's what really scared me.

And that must be what sent me out on that battle alert -- worry, fear -- and boredom. It came in the middle of the sleep period. That blaring klaxon was lost on me, of course, but I defy anyone to sleep through those lights! I watched my fellow pilots scrambling into their battle gear, and I could tell from their expressions that this probably wasn't a drill. My natural inclination was to join them; training becomes habit after a while. But I was on sick leave. Then again...

I waited until the barracks cleared out, then quickly dressed. With their helmets on, the pilots look a lot alike, and you have to look at a person's face to see for sure who it is, unless you recognise their walk or body shape. I caught up with them at the shuttle sled and just quietly followed along at the end of the group. In the launching bay, I held back until most of the Vipers launched. Then I headed for my ship. The launch crews took no notice of one more pilot. I had to wait for the ready light on the control panel and watch the launch tube to know when to launch. I didn't even bother to turn the com-line on. I hung back a little, where I wouldn't be noticed, and hoped the bridge wouldn't count the extra ship and inform the squadron leader. I couldn't actually join in the battle; my lack of communication made me more of a hindrance than a help. But I could sure stay behind and pick off any Cylons that got past them!

My plan worked pretty well. The squadron's good, but I still managed to get three kills. I thought maybe I could get back to the ship and land before anyone noticed me, but all the manoeuvring disrupted my newly healed sense of balance, and it was all I could do to fly straight. I finally just ignored my senses and concentrated on the instruments. I made an okay landing, which is fortunate, because apparently they noticed my rather erratic approach and had crash crews standing by. So much for landing unnoticed.

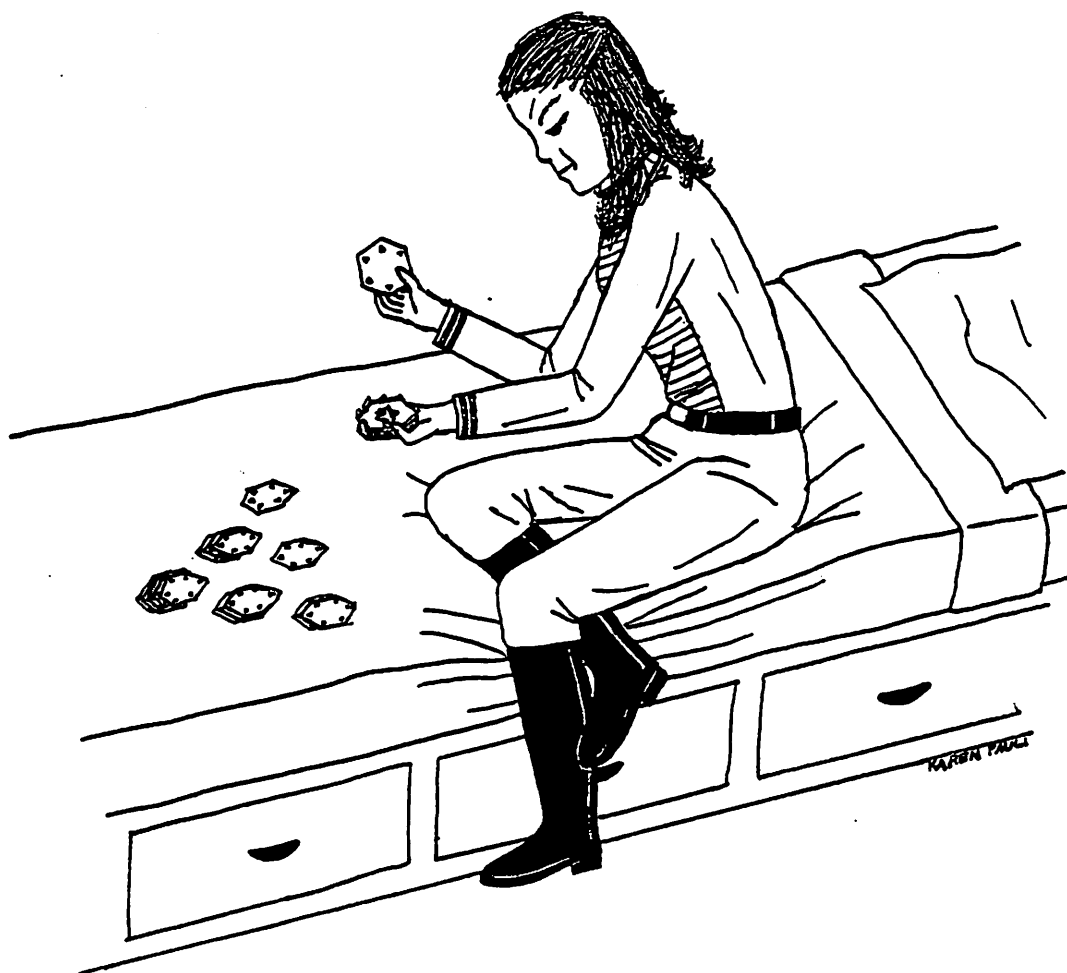
Of course, I caught frak for that flight. Once Life Centre turned me loose, that is. Though it seems I wasn't the only one who disobeyed orders. Arion made another of his unauthorised flights. But I was the one they really laid into, because, after all, I was "medically unfit for duty."

The chewing out wasn't too bad, though, since I couldn't hear a word of it. The Captain suddenly realised it halfway through and just glared at me, shaking her finger. The meaning was clear -- "Don't you ever do that again!"

Oh, well. It was fun while it lasted.

So now I'm back to boredom -- but at least the worry's gone. I can hear very loud or very high-pitched sounds, more each day. The doctor says it looks like my hearing will soon be back to normal. But until then, I'm still on sick leave.

There. I've brought my log up to date. What else can I do now? Maybe I'll polish my boots again...



**SUZY
SPACECHIK
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CHAMELEON OFFER!! EXPIRES
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CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED!!!

TWERP BRIDGE OFFICER GETS THE WAREHOUSE TREATMENT IN MULTITUDINOUS FASHIONS!!

Yes, friends, we have closeted, boxed, cold-storaged, and otherwise sequestered Athena where she can't embarrass Actors' Equity any more. No character ever got pushed out of the way with such creative panache. You're a cruel and dangerous bunch, and I love you for it.

Winner selection was tough. *I was very close to settling on the selection printed below, for the following reasons:*

- * It is brief. There are no wasted words, characters, or descriptions. It tells only one story. It doesn't over-explain.
- * It is internally consistent with the GALACTICA universe. In fact, it capitalizes wonderfully on characters and a story element unique to that universe. Unlike almost all the other entries, this one could not have taken place on the ENTERPRISE, the MILLENIUM FALCON, Gallifrey, or anyplace else I've been recently.
- * It's such a mean, dirty, underhanded thing to do to someone.
- * There is the minor problem of a built-in time limit (seven yahrens), but that's okay because nobody really knows how long a yahren is, anyway.

The other submissions were inspiring in their own ways. Some were excellent stories, but basically serious, and (let's face it) I have a bias toward more irreverent treatments. Others were effective but rather unimaginative ("Lock Athena in a closet" doesn't mean you have to do it literally -- and I've already thought of that one). And, I mean, really, we used the TARDIS last time. What kind of a zine do you think this is, huh? (We have not yet received a portrait of Starbuck wearing a long scarf, but I'm still waiting -- and I'll bet that's all he's wearing, too.)

Anyway, you were all great, and en masse you're a force to be reckoned with. Ergo, I'm announcing:

ANOTHER CONTEST!!! YES, THIS IS YOUR SECOND (well, third) CHANCE!!!

Our target this time? Back by popular demand:



SHORT CIRCUIT THE DAGGIT!!



Same rules as all the other times. Submit a brief story, plot summary, one-act play, opera, epic poem, or popsicle-stick model (didn't get any last time) during which the lovable little mechanical daggit gets offed. Eliminate Muffit II from the GALACTICA (and future contests)! Strike a blow for good taste, and space the little bugger.

Once again, wit and originality count (ditto neatness and correct address). This time, there will be an automatic five-point penalty for every mention of the word "TARDIS." Send your entries to:



Short Circuit the Daggit
c/o Lisa Golladay
2002 West Fargo, #1
Chicago, Illinois 60626



All entries must be postmarked before 1 November 1981.

No entries can be returned. Decision of the judges will be final. Do not remove under penalty of law. I am not a number, I am a free editor. Close cover before striking. ENTER EARLY AND OFTEN!

Note to Editor: Not that I'm making another threat or anything, but do you know what a bunch of drunken Cylons just might do to a mechanical daggit when they're a long way from home and feeling lonely?

And now, the winner of our LOCK ATHENA IN A CLOSET contest!

"Starbuck's Gamble"

(By Lee Gaul)

Starbuck took Athena to the RISING STAR for an evening's diversion. Their ideas of diversion differing, Athena wandered away after Starbuck began playing pyramid. His major opponent showed more interest in Athena than in the game.

Starbuck's luck was bad. His opponent's was good.

Finally, it was the last hand. Starbuck carefully examined his cards. He had a three-quarter pyramid, almost unbeatable. The odds against his opponent having a full pyramid were astronomical.

Starbuck matched the other man's bet. With a smile, the man raised the ante.

There was no way Starbuck could match it. He prepared to fold.

"You've made it too rich for me," he said regretfully.

"Just a micron," the man said smoothly. "Perhaps we could work out an alternative."

"Such as?" Starbuck was definitely interested.

The man gestured toward Athena, who was talking to a friend. "I might be willing to loan you a sum of cubits, with the lady as collateral."

"The Commander's daughter?" Starbuck was dumbfounded. Athena as collateral in a card game? "That isn't legal, moral, or ethical."

"Then you'll just have to fold. Your hand must not be as good as you've been betting."

Starbuck was stung. He knew he had a winner. "Well..."

The man pushed a pile of cubits at him. "500 cubits. Let's continue."

Mentally shrugging, Starbuck decided if the man was crazy, why not benefit from it? He took the pile of cubits, and the game went on.

Finally, the stranger called.

Smiling, Starbuck laid down his three-quarter pyramid.

The man shook his head. "Too bad." He revealed a perfect pyramid.

Starbuck gasped, staring in disbelief. Suddenly, Athena's hand was on his shoulder as she examined the cards.

"Poor dear, it's time I got you home," she said.

"Oh, no!" was all he could whisper.

His opponent stood up, grinning hugely. "It's been quite an evening, but it's over. Join me, my lady?"

"Why?"

"Your young man's luck wasn't very good tonight. You were his collateral. You're mine, now."

"What?"

"Come along." The stranger picked her up and dropped her over his broad shoulders.

Athena screamed as the man began to walk away.

"No! Starbuck, you..." Her words died to soundless rage, then she managed to

find her voice again and screamed insults at both Starbuck and the stranger.

Finally, Starbuck stood up, coming out of his shock. "Hey, stop, bring her back!"

"Good-bye, Starbuck." The man had to yell to be heard.

Starbuck stared. He had no idea how to deal with the situation. What was he going to say to the Commander -- and to Apollo?

Apollo chose that moment to find him.

"What's going on here, anyway? Where's Athena? I heard her screaming at you. Starbuck, will you wake up?"

Starbuck sat down heavily, eyes still glazed. "Apollo, you're going to hate me, but..."

Apollo didn't hate him, but he was very displeased, and almost as stunned as Starbuck.

But the Commander...

To say Adama was displeased was the understatement of the yahren.

He'd already heard the news by the time Starbuck returned to the GALACTICA. The Lieutenant slunk very quietly into the Commander's quarters. Adama waited in a towering rage.

"Well, Lieutenant? Any explanation?"

"Ahh..."

"Trading my daughter for cubits in a card game? To a member of the Otori sect? From Gemon? Starbuck, you...are...in...trouble!"

Starbuck swallowed hard. "I know, sir."

"I understand the man intends to keep Athena locked away until the next high worship of the sunstorm, whenever that is, for whatever it entails. Lieutenant, that is precisely how long you have to get my daughter back. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir."

"And if this ever happens again, you're facing a tribunal. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, get out of here, Starbuck. I don't want to see your face any more."

Starbuck rapidly backed out of the Commander's quarters. He had to find a way to trick an Otori out of a woman. And that could take some doing.

Galatea's Log

Anne Cecil



Colonial Forum



c/o Dawna Riley
P.O. Box 787

Portales, New Mexico 88130
U.S.A.

Colonial Forum is a new BATTLESTAR GALACTICA 'zine. It is a full size, 8 1/2 x 11 publication, 90+ pages, for the enjoyment of fans of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. It includes such original fiction as --

"Sheba Settling In" -- by J.R. Janoski. The PEGASUS is gone, along with Sheba's father, Commander Cain. How does she feel in a new ship with unknown people? How does she handle it?

"Kill, Kill, My Love" -- by Connie Lee. My stars, how dramatic! Starbuck investigates a mystery, and finds a piece of his past.

"Suspicion of a Starworld" -- another Satire by I Joan

"Shuttle Interview" -- by Pat Hailey.

Also projected: Fiction and items by Mark Blasky, Bruce Melton, Mary Robertson, Elaine Christiani and others. Plus Colonial Forum's own special look at life aboard the GALACTICA, poetry, cartoons, art and a surprise or two, or three or four . . .

ETA: May 1981. To be frank, our Contributor File is on overload and decision vrs costs has become difficult.

To order a copy of Colonial Forum #1 send a check or money order for \$6.00 to the address above, payable to Dawna Riley. All overseas orders make payment in U.S. funds -- add \$4.50 for Airmail postage.

SOON TO BE AVAILABLE FROM PEGASUS PRESS --

Change of Command -- by J. R. Janoski. The Colonials have been in space for eight yahrens -- living, fighting, surviving. Some things have changed -- and some things remain the same. Promotions are in order and Adama plans to make Apollo the next commander of the GALACTICA. Then a mission comes up, and Apollo finds the SPARTA -- the last deep-space cruiser launched by the Colonies. And the man in command is Colonel Jason. As a result of missile bases left by a dead race that once populated the planet over which the SPARTA holds orbit, Apollo is critically injured. Who is Jason? And what does he have to do with Apollo and a resentful Adama? And now that he is here, WHO WILL BE THE NEXT COMMANDER OF THE GALACTICA?

COC is a full-length BG novel, completely illustrated.

ETA: August 1981

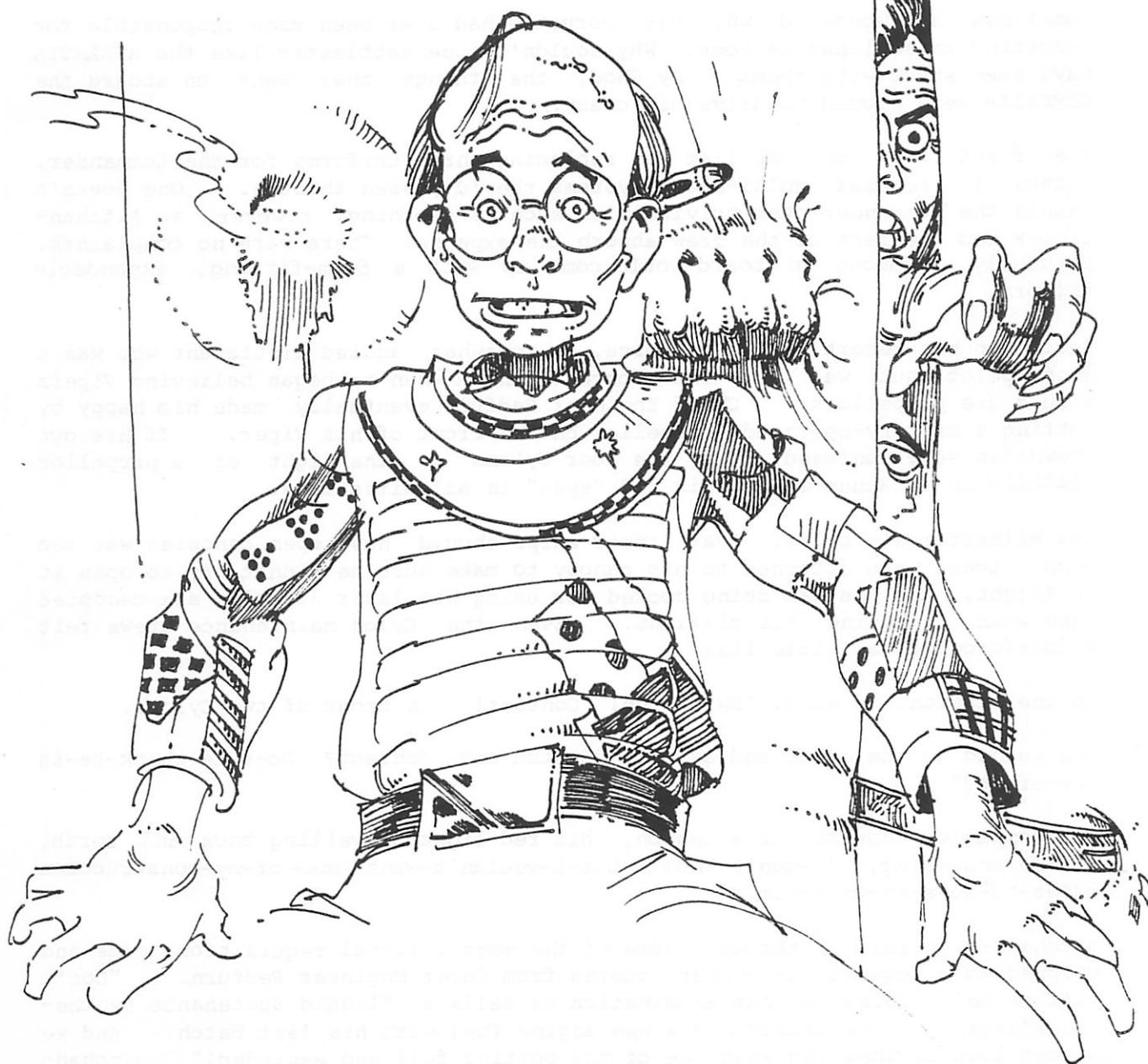
Also, "The Aurora Signal" -- by I Joan. A trilogy complete in one volume. A treacherous Cylon trap, a brain damaged warrior, and the power of extra sensory perception. ETA: December 1981
Space precludes further description.

SASE to Dawna Riley for further information and prices.



WITHDRAWN and QUARTERED

by Bennett E. Snyder



"Withdrawn and Quartered"

(By Bennett E. Snyder)

Aitchanarblok reached for another glass of ambrosia as he went over the previous section's quartermaster report before turning it in to Commander Morpheus.

Sometimes he wondered why his corvette had ever been made responsible for escorting these lunatics home. Why couldn't some battlestar like the ATLANTIA have been stuck with them? By Ghod, the things that went on aboard the DEMENTIA were enough to drive him crazy.

The first item on the list was replacing three uniforms for the Commander, thanks to several multi-moon systems they'd passed through. One doesn't hassle the Commander over trivialities such as clothing, however, so Aitchanarblok had the rest of the crew absorb the expense. There were no complaints. Hopefully, someone on board would come up with a form-fitting, expandable uniform.

Second on his report was Wilberforce, a somewhat addled lieutenant who was a good pilot but was put into forced R and R when he began believing Vipers should use propellers. Chief Engineer Redfurn eventually made him happy by putting a battery-operated propeller on the front of his Viper. If his own crewmates were confused, pity the poor Cylons -- the sight of a propeller spinning in a vacuum sent their red "eyes" in all directions.

But Wilberforce's belief that their ships should have open canopies was too much. Locks were attached to his canopy to make sure he didn't try to open it in flight, and he was being docked for using his laser to blow six canopies open when finishing his missions. Even the Cylon maintenance crews felt Wilberforce was a little flaky.

On one mission, he said, "Switch on! Contact!" in front of two Cylons.

One turned to the other and asked, "Switch-on? Contact? Does-he-think-he-is one-of-us?"

His companion thought for a centon, his red light travelling back and forth, before answering, "I-don't-know, but-I-wouldn't-want-one-of-my-construction mates-to-be-seen-with-him."

Aitchanarblok skimmed through some of the more rational requisition forms and stopped at a request for copper tubing from Chief Engineer Redfurn. "Don't tell me he's adding to that abomination he calls a "liquid sustenance synthesizer" again. We nearly had a new engine fuel with his last batch. And we almost lost Engineering when one of the bottles fell and exploded!" Aitchanarblok ran his fingers through his thinning, quickly greying hair, and took another swallow from his glass.

Here was a goodie. He still hadn't figured out how much pay the new cook deserved, since he wasn't sure he/she/it/they was officially part of the crew. "Kitty" didn't seem to care whether he/she/it/they got paid, so long as food was abundant. If a crewmember, where in Hades was he going to find a uniform to fit he/she/it/them?

To make matters worse, Nimrod came in yesterday looking for an axe. "An axe? What are you going to do with an axe?" the quartermaster demanded.

"Cut down a Solstice Tree."

"Tree? There are no trees on this ship."

"What about the one in the kitchen?"

"Tree in the kitchen?" Aitchanarblok thought for a micron. "That's our cook, you colour-blind frimp!"

"Oh. Never mind, then."

An incessant banging was going on as the quartermaster went over his report. He poured himself a triple shot of ambrosia and kept writing, the blue point of his crayon-like stylus slowly wearing down to a nub. He didn't trust himself with anything sharp.

Mord was out there, wanting weapons to arm the crew because of a "rampaging" water cooler. All it was doing was leaking, but that was enough for Mord to start screaming, "Cylons! Infiltrators! We've got to destroy the whole bunch of 'em!"

Aitchanarblok heard Mord coming down the companionway and immediately locked himself in. Then he called the bridge and asked for someone to please come and claim the wayward Warrior. Please. Thank Ghod, the bulkheads were thick.

Besides, Aitchanarblok didn't have a key to the weapons locker. That got lost some time ago. Oh, well, he could always ask the Commander to open it for him when Morpheus was in were-form, if he really needed anything -- provided the Commander didn't pull the locker off the wall.

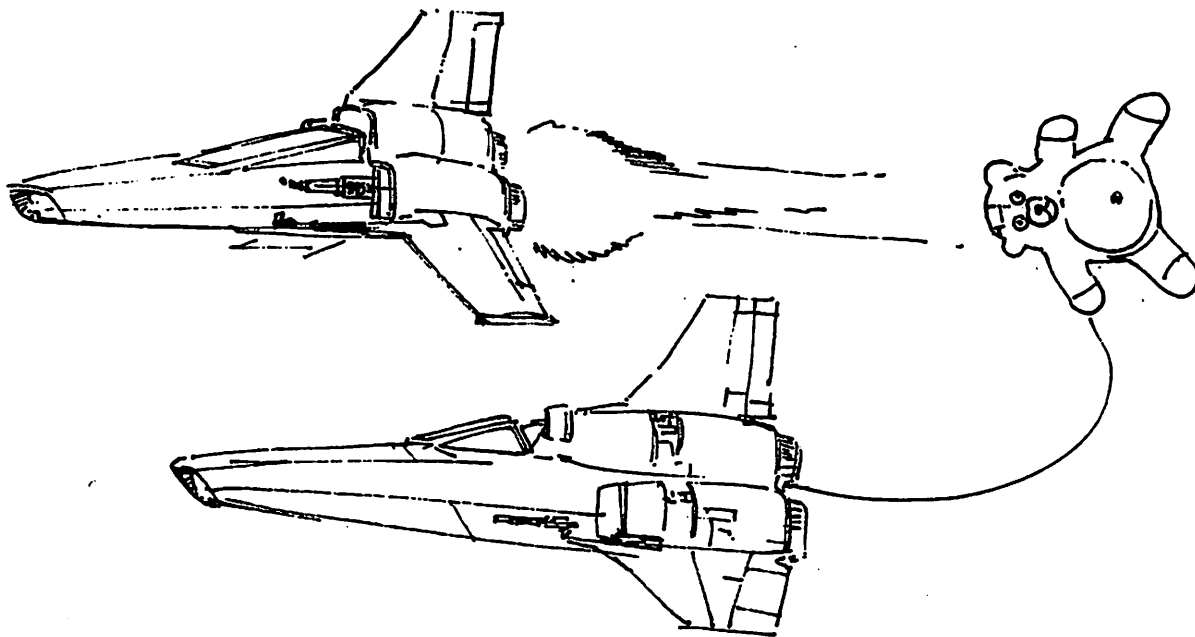
Aitchanarblok wondered about Koren, regretting his decision to give the wheel-chair-bound geriatric a souped-up battery. Now, other wheelcnair cases wanted theirs souped up as well. All the ship needed was a Grand Prix down the landing bay. Not only that, Koren and some others wanted blasters attached to their chairs, so they could be mobile artillery in case Cylons invaded the ship. That was the last thing the DEMENTIA needed, and Aitchanarblok flatly refused to do it. As it was, some of those geriatrics were too senile to tell the difference between a human and a Cylon, and Aitchanarblok wasn't about to let them experiment.

The pounding at the door finally ceased -- Aitchanarblok's hangover was just beginning -- with the sound of a laser set for stun. Aitchanarblok cautiously opened the door and watched as Symington and two Cylons carried off a stunned Mord. He went back to his desk and finished the report, hoping Tribblia wouldn't find out he'd given Neb a device to help him beat her/them at the simulator.

Wait a centon. What were those loud footsteps? And that high-pitched voice? "Aitchanarblok! Wait until we get our hands on you, you fraking excuse for a..."

Aitchanarblok quickly ran and relocked the door. His hands began to tremble; his life passed before his eyes; those two sections with the sociolator figured prominently. It was Tribblia.

He wondered if the Cylons could use a quartermaster -- cheap.



CAPTAIN, I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TALK TO YOU
ABOUT SERGEANT A...

Arts.80

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SHORE LEAVE



By Marj Ihsen

"Shore Leave"

(By Marj Ihssen)

Apollo stretched and removed his jacket to let the sun warm his back. He stood still, luxuriating in the feel of the breeze that rustled along the hillside. Lords, it was a long time since they last sighted a living planet. For almost a yahren, the GALACTICA and her Fleet cruised through a void seemingly populated only by dead systems. Supplies -- and tempers -- neared an explosion point before they picked up signs of this isolated system on their scanners.

Since there'd been no sign of Cylons for sectars, Adama and the Council authorised ground leave for most of the population. As usual, the Warriors were in the last sections to be given leave. And even then, they found themselves assigned small tasks.

Although if they were all as easy as this... Apollo smiled to himself and bent to pick up the pack at his feet. Placing additional instruments for the research teams was a wonderful opportunity to get away from everyone for a while.

Well, almost everyone, he added to himself as he turned to glance up the hillside where Boxey was busily investigating a pile of rocks. And he'd seen Starbuck setting out with a pretty civilian in tow, though how he managed to arrange that, the Lords only knew. Apollo was still chuckling as he climbed to the hilltop just beyond Boxey and began setting up his instruments. Boxey joined him, and with his help they soon finished the preliminary readings.

Beyond the hill was a valley dotted with nodding flowers and pine-like trees. A stream crossed the valley in a series of pools and small rapids. Boxey stood at his father's side for a moment, then, with a grin, the boy was off down the hillside, stopping to sniff the flowers, chasing several small furry beasts to safety among the trees, and causing several avian creatures to squawk in dismay.

"Dad! Come see! I found a nest!"

There were several eggs still in the nest; huddled among them were two small, scrawny, wide-mouthed hatchlings. Hearing a worried screeching, Apollo looked around and located the nest's owner in a nearby tree.

"Come away, Boxey. If you get her too upset, she'll abandon the nest."

"Can't we take one with us? She wouldn't miss just one, would she?"

"No, Boxey. We don't know what it eats, or even if it could survive with us. And there's no room for a bird to fly."

Boxey looked at the hatchlings for a moment longer, then straightened. It didn't take him more than a micron to realise how close the stream was, and he

was off at a run. Apollo followed slowly. The boy already knew enough not to go too far from his father, but after being cooped up so long, the lure of such a home-like planet was undeniable.

By the time Apollo caught up to Boxey, the boy had his feet and arms wet from splashing in the water. He lay on the bank, his head over the edge, watching the fish in the water.

"Why can't we settle here, Dad?" he asked. "Dr. Salik says there's nothing here to hurt us."

Apollo ruffled the boy's hair. "There aren't any diseases, and this world has all the requirements to support life," he agreed. "But, well, there's not enough arable land, and it's metal-poor. There are too many mountain ranges, too many seas and deserts. And it's cold, far colder than Caprica. According to the scientists, winters here last for sectors. Maybe some day a small colony could survive here, but not our people."

"But it's so beautiful!"

That it was, Apollo acknowledged as he looked around. The light from the red sun gave a peculiar, yet pleasing, cast to the scenery.

"Dad? Can I go swimming? Please, Dad?"

Swimming? Apollo looked at the water. It wasn't too deep; the bottom was clearly visible. And Salik had cleared the water for drinking...

"Please, Dad?" Boxey knelt beside Apollo, and with a grin, the man nodded his consent. In a micron, clothes went flying, and Boxey splashed into the water.

"Dad?" Boxey's wet head popped back into sight. "Want to swim with me?"

Now, that wasn't a bad idea. Apollo's jacket and uniform quickly followed Boxey's clothing. Like two kids home from school, father and son played and frolicked among the rocks, sending sparkling wavelets racing across the water.

* * * * *

On the hillside above the pool, a small cluster of flowers in a secluded grove, warmed by the sun, began to unfurl their golden buds...

* * * * *

On the far side of the valley, Starbuck sat staring at the foothills. The pretty dealer he'd met the night before on the RISING STAR wasn't unwilling, but she soon returned to the camp. His own assigned tasks were completed, but he found himself strangely reluctant to go back.

For some unknown reason, he was depressed. Suddenly, the life he led seemed empty, shallow. Flitting from game to game, patrol to patrol, woman to woman. No past, and the future always in question. Lords, how he envied Apollo! Apollo had a past, and a future as Adama's first-born son. He was a Hades of a Warrior in his own right. And he had a family of his own -- Boxey, Serina's son. And Serina, a woman to love and cherish through eternity. He even en-

vied Apollo his grief and pain at her death. It showed the depth to which he loved...

* * * * *

The flower buds opened fully to the light, and their delicate scent began to drift with the winds...

* * * * *

Apollo lay still, eyes half closed, totally relaxed and enjoying the feel of the breeze against his bare skin. He glanced at the boy sleeping beside him, tired from his play in the water. His son -- his son, and Serina's. One hand smoothed the wet hair from the boy's face.

Lords, how he envied Starbuck sometimes -- his carefree way of life, never becoming attached, never staying long, never regretting... Never loving deeply or fearing the pain the future might bring. Not having to worry about others, or having a tradition to live up to. Not having countless lives waiting on your every move, knowing so many depended on you. Not fearing the slightest mistake would cause another's death -- like Zac...

Apollo denied the memory, forcibly directing his thoughts elsewhere. He stared at the clouds, seeking familiar images in their shifting shapes. He was nearly asleep himself when strange thoughts began to creep into his mind -- visions of places he'd never been, a house he didn't recognise, a tall blond man, a picnic in the country, a daggit happily chasing sticks. A woman bent over a table -- a woman he somehow recognised, but couldn't identify.

"Muffit! Muffit, come here!"

Muffit? The woman turned, and suddenly Apollo knew why she was so familiar. Serina...

"Boxey, time to eat..."

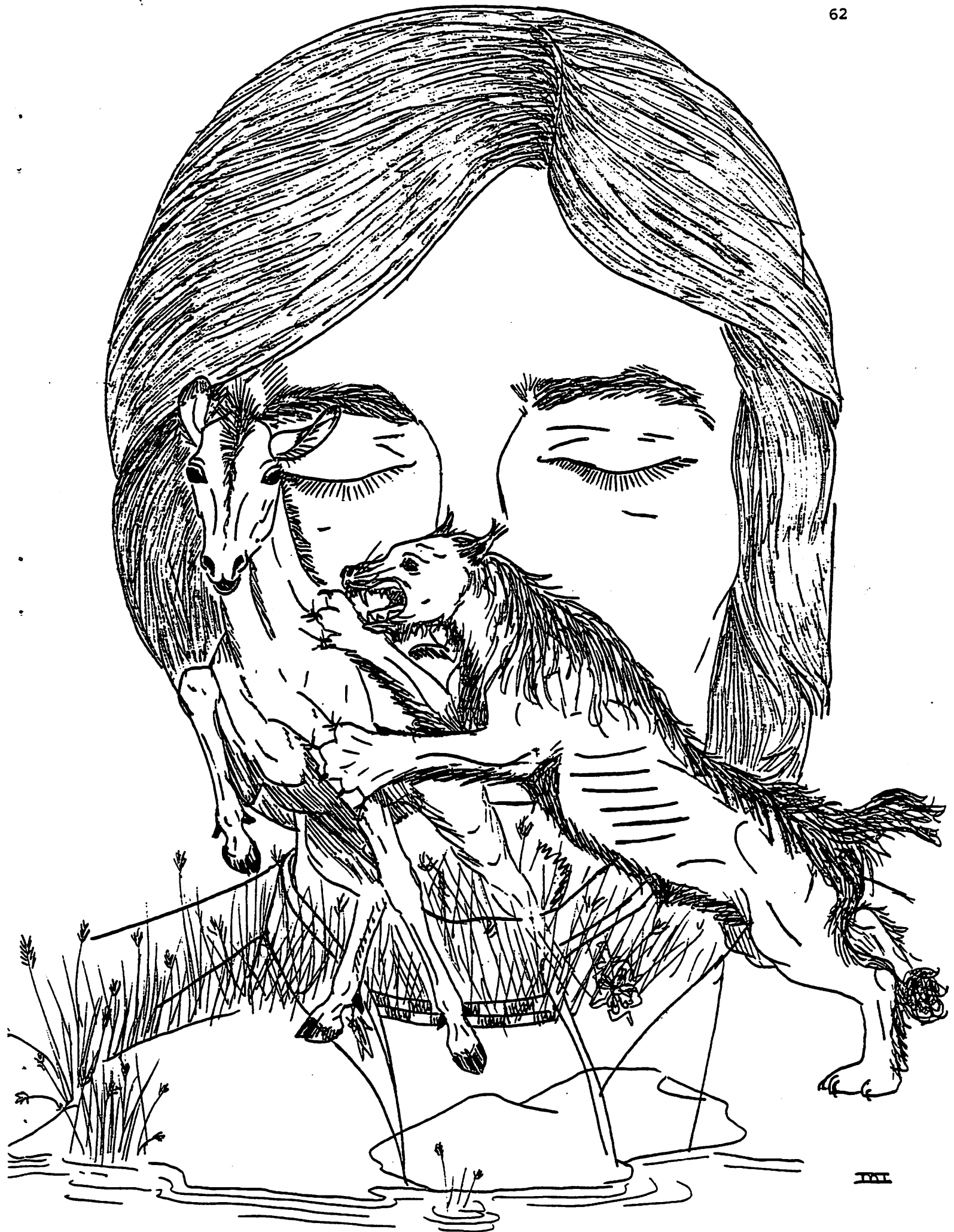
Boxey? Apollo blinked, realising he must have been dreaming. Dreaming? Even awake, the images persisted.

"Muffit," Boxey murmured in his sleep.

Suddenly, Apollo knew why so much seemed unfamiliar, why the man and Serina seemed so tall. Somehow, he was in Boxey's dream. Shyly, yet curiously, he closed his eyes again, letting the images flow, reliving a happier time, until the dream dissolved into incoherence.

Apollo opened his eyes and looked around, slightly awed. How...?

His attention was drawn by movement farther down the valley, and he spotted one of the horned animals that ran in herds on the mountain slopes. Even as he wondered what had driven it from the protection of the herd, he found his mind filled with images of a huge bast-like creature erupting from the grass. He felt the pain of claws scoring a hindquarter, the frantic flight for safety, the stumbling stop by the stream, trembling legs refusing to run further, breath coming in shuddering gasps. And he sensed, too, the ravening mind of



the predator creeping toward its helpless prey. In horror, he felt the herd-beast's terror, felt the predator's spring, the pain, the taste of warm blood in his mouth...

Shaking, Apollo somehow pulled free, seeking reassurance in the mind of the sleeping boy beside him, losing his fear in the peaceful memories of Boxey's dreams. But the wonder was too great, and once again, like a child with a new toy, he reached out to touch the living things around him.

* * * * *

The bell-shaped flowers were in full bloom, their pollen floating in the gentle breeze, a golden dust in the rocky nook where the flowers grew...

* * * * *

Starbuck sat motionless on a boulder, his eyes unseeing, tears streaking his cheeks. His mind was filled with a terrible sense of loss, with nebulous shapes that refused to solidify into memory -- the parents he never knew, the first girl he ever loved, his foster parents, all the people who came and went so fleetingly in his life.

He tried to touch those memories, but what followed terrified him. He wasn't flying through the tree branches in giant leaps; nor was he digging in the dirt with his teeth, seeking grubs. He was sitting on a rock, seeing the valley around him -- yet he was elsewhere, too. He fled in panic, his mind careening from image to image in a terrifying kaleidoscope of sound and sensation. His body cowered beside the boulder, curled in a ball as if to shut everything out, but the images still invaded his mind.

Across the valley, Apollo sensed pain and confusion. Without thinking, he reached out to touch, to comfort.

Starbuck found himself held in comforting arms like a scared child. The images faded to a feeling of safety and caring. His panic ebbed. He looked up, but he was alone, huddled by the boulder. Yet he sensed someone else. Fear began to return, then a gentle voice echoed in his mind.

"Starbuck."

Starbuck recognised the voice. "Apollo?" He looked around, but there was no sign of his friend. "Where are you?" His voice ended on a rising note of uncertainty.

Warm laughter and strong arms again, and then he was with/in/mingled with Apollo. A vision of laughing green eyes filled his mind, and memories of the times they'd shared together. Starbuck clung to them as a drowning man clings to an outstretched hand.

Gradually, as his uncertainty faded, he reached out to Apollo. They explored each other's minds and memories, seeing themselves through other eyes, living different lives, exchanging thoughts and secrets they never dared put into words, sharing fears and longings never acknowledged, finding strength in

sharing and acceptance.

Then, almost overwhelmed, they drew back, touching only on a level of communication, leaving the areas of past memories and future fears.

Starbuck was shaken to his soul by the pain and grief his friend suffered. He wanted to cry, to take him by the shoulders and shake him...

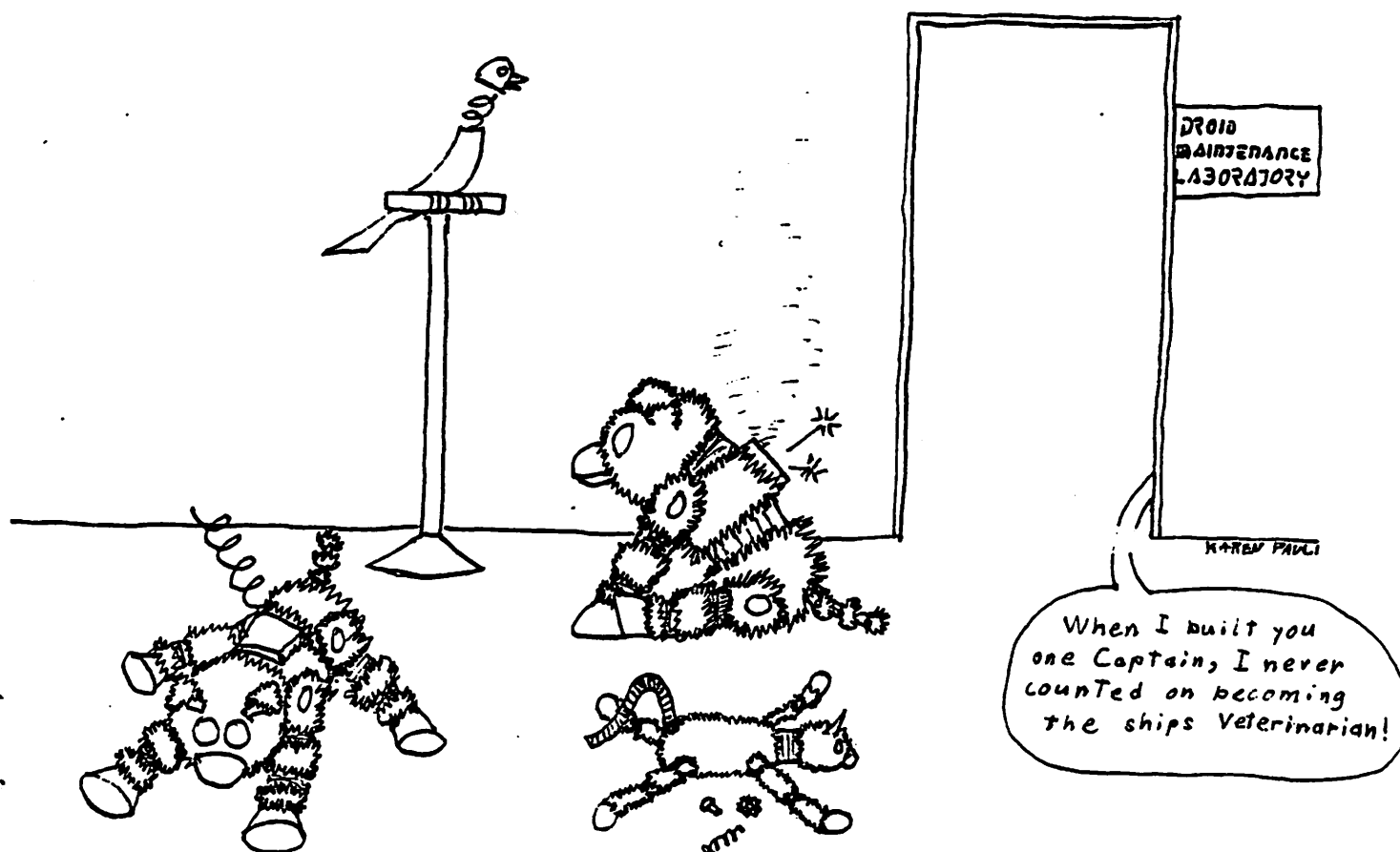
And Apollo was torn by the loneliness hiding behind Starbuck's carefree facade. He wanted to protect his friend, tell him he'd never be alone again...

Each thought, each feeling was clear, and the sound of laughter echoed between them. They never knew what time they spent in wordless communication before, at last, it began to fade. The sun dipped behind the mountains, and dusk brought a cold wind whistling down the slopes.

Shaking, Apollo roused Boxey, and they scrambled into their clothes. The contact with Starbuck winked out completely -- yet something remained, some kind of inner awareness of Starbuck, some kind of subliminal bond.

Starbuck was waiting for them when Apollo and Boxey reached the camp. The boy ran off to join the other youngsters, but Apollo stayed by the gate with Starbuck. They were silent as they remembered what they'd shared, each half-wondering if it'd been a dream, each knowing it was not.

As one, their hands went to each other's shoulders in a fierce grip that expressed more than mere words could ever encompass. Then, laughing, arm-in-arm, they headed off to see what they could scrounge from the cooks.



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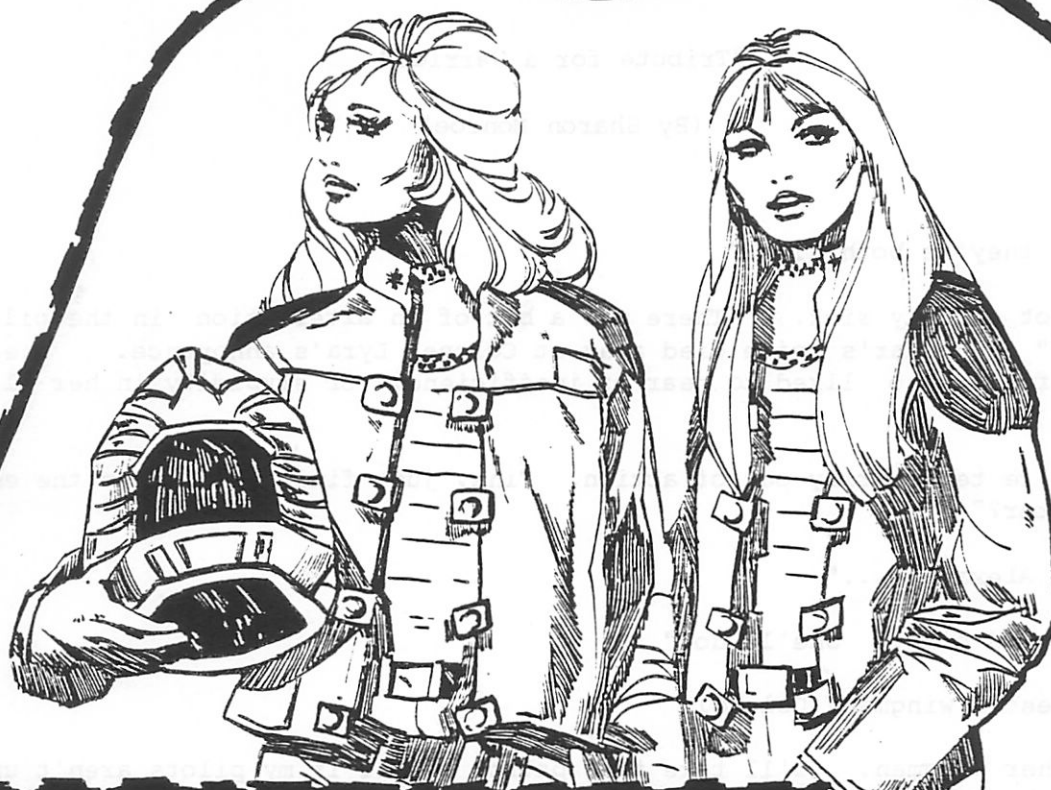
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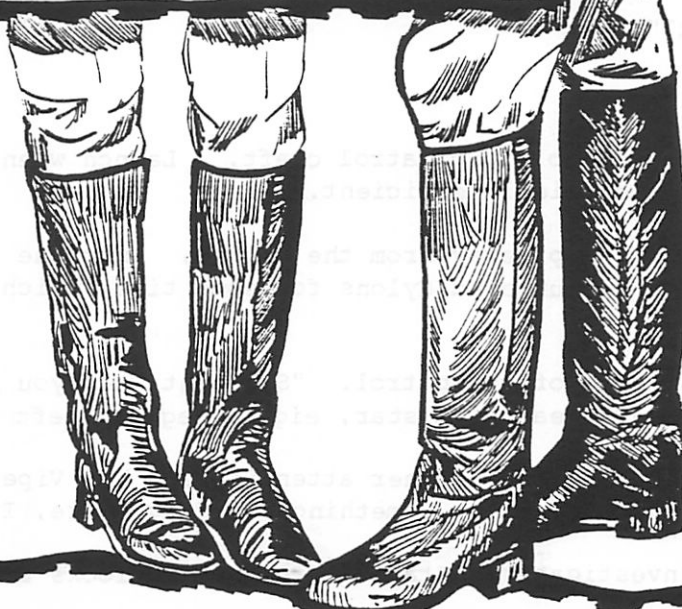
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TRIBUTE for a WARRIOR

SHARON MONROE



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"Tribute for a Warrior"

(By Sharon Monroe)

"You mean they're both sick?"

"Well, not exactly sick. . . There was a bit of an altercation in the pilots' lounge..." Shandar's voice died away at Colonel Lyra's annoyance. She was not an officer who liked to hear of inefficiency or stupidity in her flight patrols.

"And they're temporarily out of action. Fine, just fine. Who's on the emergency roster?"

"Sergeant Alexandra..."

"She's a good pilot. She'll do."

"She'll need a wingman, Colonel."

"I'll be her wingman. I'll take this patrol myself if my pilots aren't up to it. Put them both on report." Colonel Lyra stalked off the bridge.

Ensign Shandar slumped in his seat, sighing in relief. The Colonel was in a foul mood today. He alerted Alexandra.

* * * * *

Sergeant Alexandra was in her Viper and ready for launch when Lyra arrived. "At least one of my pilots can be ready for patrols," Lyra thought. But then, Alexandra was used to patrols at a micron's notice; she'd spent much of her time lately on emergency call.

"Ready, Sergeant?"

"Ready, Colonel."

"Transferring control to Viper patrol craft. Launch when ready." Shandar's voice was steady and quietly efficient.

The two sleek craft swept away from the OSIRIS, into the star field ahead of them. They hadn't encountered Cylons for some time, which seemed to worry the Commander.

Lyra broke the silence of the patrol. "Sergeant, can you make out anything on your front scanners? Near that star, eighty degrees left of centre."

"Checking." Alexandra turned her attention and her Viper starward. "No... Wait! Yes! It's gone again! Something's hiding there, I'd say."

"Maybe. I'll investigate. Stay clear. If it looks like trouble, run and warn the OSIRIS."

"I could check it..."

But Colonel Lyra had already turned her Viper, sweeping in toward the yellow star, paying scant attention to the three planets orbiting it. Alexandra followed at a discrete distance, obeying orders.

Laser fire sliced space just in front of Lyra's craft. She rolled quickly out of the line of fire. Her eyes confirmed her scanner report -- Cylon Raiders directly ahead, and gunning for her. Then suddenly there were two of them behind her. Her Viper swerved crazily as laser fire took out her left engine. Lyra cursed, trying to pull her ship back under control and avoid more Cylon fire at the same time.

A Raider wandered into her sights. Maybe luck was with her yet. She fired, letting her ship wobble, and watched the ship disintegrate.

Another Raider slipped by her, and another blast of fire cut across the front of her ship. Then that ship dissolved in flame. Only two more of the enemy cautiously flew past, looking for an opportunity for the killing shot.

Alexandra, too, was under fire. She managed to avoid the initial volley, and appeared undamaged, dodging the attempted pinwheel attack by three Raiders.

"Alexandra?"

"I'm unhit, Colonel."

"Good. I think they're learning respect. Let's finish the lesson," said Lyra, crossing her fingers and hoping the Cylons didn't learn too fast.

For several very long centons, the two Warriors flew and fought for their lives. The Cylons were skilled pilots, determined to destroy the Colonials. When the last Raider exploded into shrapnel, Alexandra permitted herself a sigh of relief. She'd taken a few minor hits, and one serious one, but she knew she could make it back to the OSIRIS. Then she noticed Colonel Lyra's Viper floating slowly against the star field, drifting away from her.

"Colonel? Colonel, are you there? Are you all right?"

Silence.

"Colonel Lyra?" Alexandra held her breath as her fingers tightened around her control stick. What price their victory?

"I'm here, Sergeant." The voice was weak, wavery. "My communications panel is a mess. Sorry I didn't answer sooner." Lyra's head was muddled. Things didn't look too clear. She tried to hide her uneasiness.

"Have you got control of your ship?" Alexandra asked. Her voice was normal, concerned and alert, ready to offer assistance if there was anything she could do.

"Very little, I'm afraid. I got that last Raider by luck alone. How about your ship? Much damage? Are you all right?"

"I'm fine. My Viper's seen its best days, but I'll be able to make it back to base. Can I help you?"

"The best thing you can do is get your metal tail back to the OSIRIS and get another patrol or two out here. I can drift until a shuttle gets here."

"Colonel, I think you're drifting into planetary atmosphere!"

It was true. Lyra cursed again. Her crippled Viper was being drawn, slowly but surely, into the atmosphere of the second planet.

"Well, I guess I won't need a rescue shuttle, then."

"Is there any way you can pull out of it? Can you land?"

"You're getting incoherent, Alexandra. Pull yourself together. If this planet's livable, I'll try to land. Go for the OSIRIS, Sergeant. That's an order."

"After you land, Colonel."

Lyra's head was spinning again. "Not now," she thought. "Wait just a little while. If I've got a chance at all, I'll blow it if I can't think."

"If you're damaged, don't get too close," she finally said. "Alexandra...if it comes to it...I belong to the stars..."

"I understand, Colonel...Lyra," was the soft reply.

The Viper plunged deeper into the atmosphere, out of control, seeking its own death. Lyra's feeble attempts at control brought it level once, twice, and yet a third time, but the ship kept dropping, spinning, and contrarily pulling in directions she didn't want. Her stomach was as unsettled as her head.

Alexandra was having better luck. Her ship was maintaining a relatively steady course as she followed Lyra down, fingers crossed and clenched. With every veer of the Colonel's ship, she froze inside; with every levelling off, she breathed a prayer.

They went down.

* * * * *

Aboard the OSIRIS, two distress signals beeped quietly away on Shandar's board. Commander Christopher, Captain Diana, Sergeant Arion, Colonel Tyr, and a handful of bridge personnel watched in silence.

"Commander?" Diana's voice was entreating.

"We're on alert. We'll stay that way, without launching, until we have a better idea of what's out there. I'm not risking sending another patrol into the jaws of the Cylons."

"We've got two pilots out there!"

"They'll get a message off if they can."

Eyes riveted to those two lights, nobody noticed Arion slip quietly off the bridge.

Sergeant Arion made his way quietly and quickly to the nearest launch bay, to a relatively empty area. He walked briskly to a Viper, trying to look like he belonged there and knew what he was doing. He owed the Colonel something, and this might be the chance to repay part of that debt.

He didn't see the rangy, grey-haired individual examining the undercarriage of the Viper next to his. Captain Hannibal watched him hop into the cockpit and begin pre-launch checks.

"There aren't any patrols scheduled for here and now, and we're not on a launch alert," the man said conversationally as he stood up and stretched.

Arion nearly jumped out of the Viper. The last thing he'd expected to run into was somebody under a Viper. The older man wasn't in any of the squadrons, and he didn't belong to the maintenance crews. But Arion didn't have time to figure out who he might be. Lyra needed him.

"Two distress signals activated by a patrol," he said casually, his heart pumping furiously. "I'm going to check it out. It's Colonel Lyra and Sergeant Alexandra."

"Not standard procedure. You can't bluff me, young man. I've been flying and manning ships since before you were born."

"I'm going. To Hades with standard procedure when it leaves defenceless women alone in space!" Arion finished his pre-flight preparations, closed his canopy, and hit the launch switch.

"Defenceless? How well do you know those two? Hey, Sergeant, wait! That's an or... Oh, well..."

The nearest communications board happened to be in the Viper next to him. Captain Hannibal jumped in.

On the bridge, the others were still watching the steady blip of the distress signals.

"We've got to know what's happened to them," Diana cried.

Another light flared on Ensign Shandar's console. "Somebody just launched!" he shouted.

"Who the...?" Christopher began.

Diana glanced about and knew exactly who it was. "Arion!"

"Sergeant Arion, return to base! That's an order! You don't have permission to launch." The Commander's voice thundered across space.

He got no response.

"Incoming message -- from the patrol!" said Major Layla from across the bridge. "Sergeant Alexandra reports ambush by Cylons. Raiders destroyed, but both Vipers are damaged. They're trying to land." She read off a string of coordinates. Arion must have been listening, because he suddenly veered in that direction.

"Captain Hannibal here. One of our pilots just took off after a missing patrol."

"I know, Hannibal, I know."

"Do you really want him out there alone, Commander? I can follow."

A moment's indecision. "Go. Try to keep him out of trouble."

Diana stared at the Commander. "Captain Hannibal? He's not a pilot!"

"Used to be one of the best. If you check his records, you'll find he's still rated to fly anything human or Cylon mind has yet concocted. Don't just stand there, Captain! Get a rescue shuttle outfitted!"

Diana dashed from the bridge.

"Shandar, Cylon presence has been confirmed. Why isn't this battlestar on red alert? Scramble our squadrons!"

Shandar broke from the moment's reverie. Klaxons rang and bright lights dimmed to red.

Christopher scowled. Nothing was going right today. Two pilots out because of a brawl, leaving an empty patrol. The replacement pilots running into Cylons and turning up missing, maybe injured. Another pilot disobeying orders to follow them. So he sent out a non-regulation engineer to find him, and had a real pilot, one of his best, chase after in a shuttle. It might almost be a comedy. Almost.

* * * * *

On the planet, Alexandra finally spotted land. The planet had a breatheable atmosphere, but unfortunately was about 95% water. The island ahead looked like the only landing place for quite some distance. Fortunately, her Viper would make it. She wondered where Lyra's ship was. She'd dropped off the scanner some time before, and could be almost anywhere.

Something on her control board sputtered and came to life. She was picking up Lyra's distress signal again! But, Lords! It was way out over the water somewhere! Somewhere in that ocean, Lyra waited. Without a micron's hesitation, Alexandra turned her Viper from that inviting land to trace the Colonel's signal.

She flew for long centons, nearly a centar, trying to pinpoint Lyra's location. She finally had to admit the ship was under water, unreachable. She

blinked hard as tears blurred her eyes. There was nothing she could do. She turned back to the island.

Alexandra's fuel gauges weren't reading properly. Her engines suddenly cut out, still quite a distance from land. Her blood ran cold as she tried to glide in. One finger poised near a seldom-used switch. If her ship went down, she would pop the canopy before water pressure became too great, and swim for shore. She wished she was a better swimmer.

* * * * *

Lyra was getting very tired. She was a good swimmer, but her injuries and that smashing crash into the water had taken their toll. She'd been lucky enough to hit the right toggle while going under, and escaped the rapidly sinking Viper, but now she wondered if she had the strength to reach the island ahead. She knew it was there, but it was so far away...

She'd kicked off her boots and jacket right away, dropping even her laser. The cold water kept her conscious, but there was only so much body and mind could take...

She wasn't going to make it.

She knew that with certainty. Her strokes were getting her nowhere; her stomach was full of water; she couldn't keep her head out of the water; every gasp for air was torture. She suddenly realised her arms and legs weren't moving. They were numb. Lyra was floating, slowly sinking deeper into the water. She made an attempt to start swimming again, couldn't even think of a curse when her arms and legs refused her mind's commands.

The water closed over her head.

"Starbuck! Arion! Oh, my Beloved, my Son, I'm coming soon. At last, I'm coming to you." A laughing sob echoed in her mind.

Some wayward current caught her up and carried her gently toward land.

* * * * *

Sergeant Arion and Captain Hannibal stood on the shore of a small island, staring out over the blue-grey water. Two distress signals still beeped quietly from somewhere out there.

"It can't be," Arion choked out. "She can't be dead. Not like this!"

Hannibal's face was grave. "We'll comb the beach. If they got out of their ships, they may have swum this far. You go left, I'll go right. Keep in communications range."

Arion nodded. The two men separated.

Above them, a shuttle and a Viper escort streaked into the atmosphere.

* * * * *

Alexandra had a vague feeling of hurt. Her lungs were burning. She gradually realised the source of the pain was someone pushing air into her aching chest. She pushed with one hand, trying to knock the someone aside. He didn't move. Then she was coughing violently, feeling nauseous. Strong arms held her, and she threw up on the sand. Tears ran, mingling with the seawater rivulets on her face. Sandy sharpness cut at her cold, sore body.

"Captain?"

Captain Hannibal glanced at Diana and the med tech running toward him, then back at the sick, wet, dishevelled woman crying in his arms.

"I think she'll be all right. Anything from Arion or Lyra?" he asked. Diana shook her head.

Hannibal and the med tech helped Alexandra to very wobbly feet, and headed for the shuttle. Diana dashed off along the shore, looking for Arion and/or Lyra.

* * * * *

Arion knelt in the water near the shore, gently holding the cold, still body of Colonel Lyra. She hadn't made it. He was as soaked as she was. He'd spotted her drifting in a current, and had to swim quite some distance to retrieve her and bring her to shore.

But it was no use. Lyra was dead. He tried to breathe life back into her, trying to deny her death. Her body was totally limp; there was no pulse, no breath in her at all. She drowned in the unfeeling waters of this forsaken planet.

Arion stared over the water for a long time. He was as cold and bleak as everything around him. Finally, his eyes dropped back to that gentle face. He sighed.

"I tried, Lyra. I'm sorry. I couldn't help you."

He gathered her into his arms, rising to his feet. She was so small, so light, yet was the heaviest burden he'd ever carried, the worst drain of strength and will he'd ever known. He walked slowly along the beach, eyes riveted to her face. How long since he'd kissed those lips? He lifted her head, bending his own, and kissed them one last time. It felt like nothing. Her life force was missing.

"How do I tell them, Lyra? What do I say? Maybe I won't have to say anything. They'll know, when they see you."

A shadow blocked his way. He looked up.

Captain Diana stared, knowing with a glance what had happened, that he hadn't been in time. Then she blinked, hard, and Arion heard the slight gasp before she could control her reaction.

Her voice was carefully controlled, tinged with sorrow. "It will be a great loss to all of us. I know you did your best, Arion. I'm sorry. Alexandra was luckier..." Then she didn't know what to say, and was silent.



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They walked quietly, hiding what they felt from each other. In that silence, they reached the shuttle and the Vipers clustered around it. The others gathered, shock evident on their features. Finally, Arion laid her body down, kneeling at her side. Slowly, the others bowed their heads.

Alexandra stumbled over from where she'd been sitting next to the shuttle, and knelt next to Colonel Lyra, across from Arion. She knew how close she'd been to joining Lyra, and she was badly shaken.

A hand reached out, was withdrawn. Colonel Lyra and Sergeant Alexandra had never been close friends, but they worked together for yahrens, and it was impossible not to feel something at the loss. Alexandra often hid her sorrows. Then she noticed something.

"She lost her star," Alexandra said.

The others stared, uncomprehending.

Alexandra pulled one of the Warrior insignia from her own throat, and pinned it carefully to the Colonel's uniform.

"We beat the Cylons, but the planet beat us. I'm sorry, Lyra," she whispered.

Arion swallowed his tears with difficulty. Then he picked up the body and carried it into the shuttle. A med tech assisted Alexandra to her place as the Warriors dispersed to their Vipers.

They left the planet in brooding silence, taking Lyra back to the OSIRIS for the proper rites and a Warrior's interment. As she wished, they sent her body to the heart of the yellow star.

The next days were gloomy aboard the OSIRIS, as the crew adjusted, slowly, to Lyra's loss.

Those who hadn't known her well respected the grief of her friends. She left a vacancy, a realisation of how close death could be to any of them, of how much life meant to them. Over the yahrens, they'd all come to respect her.

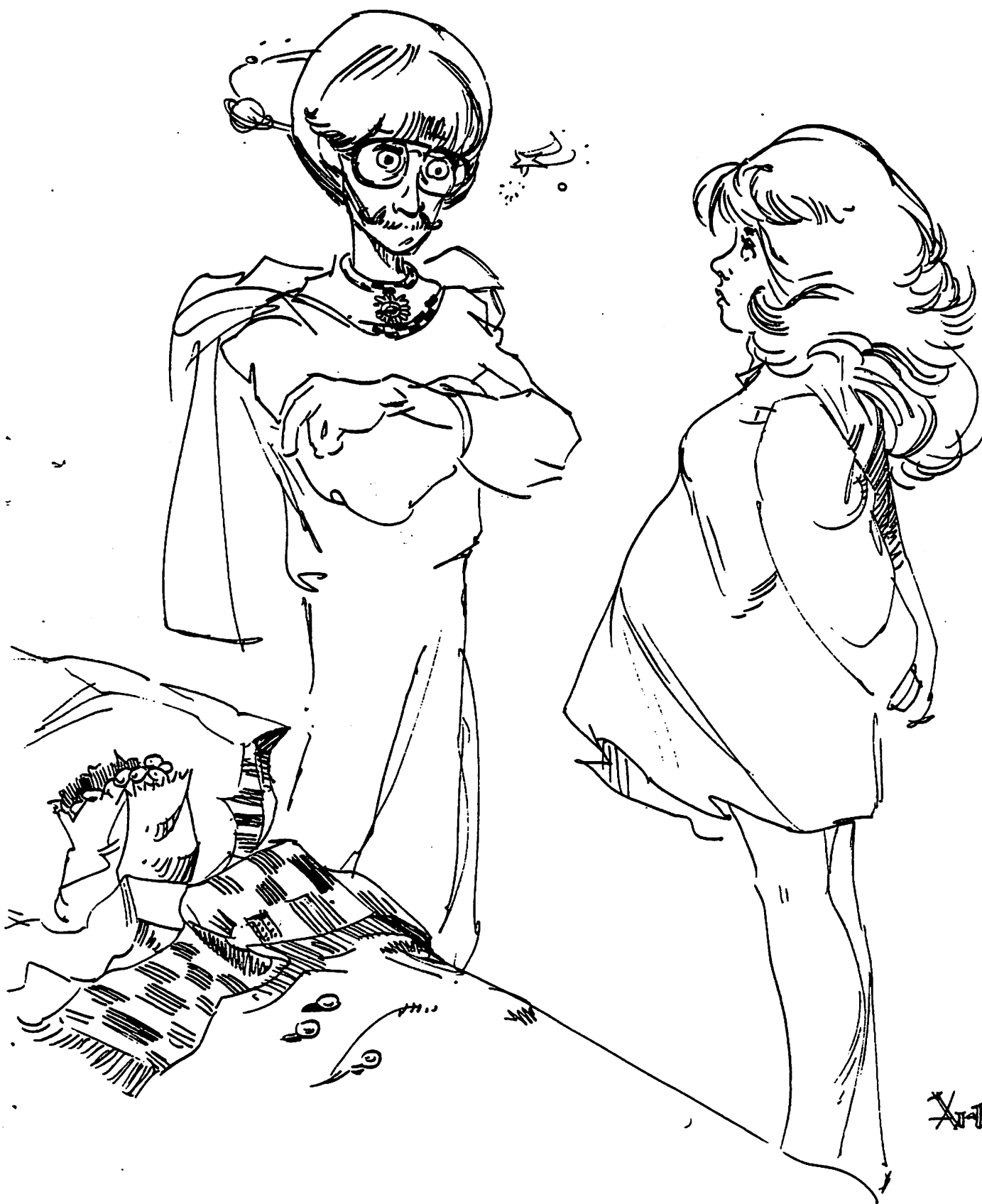
Alexandra was still in Life Centre. Her injuries from the crash-landing and her near-drowning weren't serious, but were extensive enough to rate her a rest. She wished there'd been another way to get off the emergency roster.

Arion found it hard to adapt to Lyra's absence. As long as he'd been on the OSIRIS, she was there. Lyra and the battlestar were almost synonymous. He was adrift for a time, not understanding how the others could so casually accept her death. His own grief blinded him to the sympathy and emotions of many other people. Even the red-haired captain...

Diana kept her feelings to herself, as usual keeping her own counsel. As for their yahrens of friendship, much had changed in the sectars before Lyra's death, and perhaps even Diana couldn't say what she truly felt.

Eventually, life went on.

WHO...?



"Who...?"

{By David Morgan}

I'm recording this entry under voice lock because, even though the Commander ordered the investigation -- yes, ordered it -- he's never going to believe the story. So, let him think, like the rest of the crew, that Captain Laia's protecting someone. It can't do any harm, and at least he won't be doubting my sanity.

It all began with a party about two sectars ago. Off-hand, I can't remember what the party was for; it's irrelevant, anyway. What matters is that nearly everyone left drunk. Except maybe Diana, who put me to bed; she never gets drunk. I know, however, that Laia was as drunk as any of the others, and that she barely managed to stagger from the Officers' Club.

Next morning, Laia was sick. She figured it was just a hangover, so she didn't do anything about it. But when she was sick for the next several mornings, and when her uniform started feeling uncomfortably tight, she decided she'd better see a doctor.

"Nothing to worry about, Captain," Dr. Senbi told her cheerfully. "It's just a touch of morning sickness. Congratulations. You're pregnant."

"I'm what?"

"Pregnant. You know, having a baby. It happens all the time, you know."

Senbi, I gather, was positively delighted. He would be. It never occurred to him that Commander Christopher might not be quite as pleased with having one of his senior officers out of action for sectars.

And, of course, Christopher was not pleased. When he saw Senbi's report, he was furious. First, he demanded that Life Centre repeat all its tests; then, with the second set of results in front of him, he summoned Laia to his quarters and proceeded to interrogate her. All Hades broke loose when she wouldn't -- or maybe couldn't -- give him any answers.

"Who is the father?" the Commander demanded over and over.

"I don't know, sir, really. I don't know what happened, I don't remember..." She was almost in tears.

"How could you, one of my top combat officers, possibly be careless enough to forget your last contraceptive implant?"

"But I didn't forget, Commander, honestly, I didn't. I even had Dr. Senbi check. I went in when I was scheduled, and..."

"Nonsense, Captain. Those implants are foolproof. Now, who is the father?"

That's when the Commander dragged me into the affair. He told me Laia was about three sectors pregnant -- and this only a sector after the party! -- refused to name the father, and generally refused to cooperate in any way. He wanted me to get the answers from her. Just about then, I fervently wished I'd never let Diana persuade me to tell him about my telepathic abilities.

"Look, Commander, it's not as if this were a matter of life and death. I can't go around prying into someone's mind just because..."

"Morgan, she's pregnant. She deliberately violated orders, ignored her implant, and conceived a child, endangering this ship at a time when we need every available pilot to defend against the Cylons and the Lords only know what else. It could very well be a matter of life and death."

I gave in; there wasn't much else I could do. He was so upset about it, I was afraid he'd have a stroke...

Like I said, it all began with that party. Laia left the Officers' Club with some of Orange Squadron, but she eventually wandered off alone. Somewhere along the way, she stumbled into someone she'd never seen before. He was tall, with very curly hair and prominent blue eyes, and was dressed oddly, in baggy clothes, a floppy black hat, and an incredibly long striped scarf that wound around his ankles and trailed on the deck.

"Who...?" Laia began.

"Yes, that's right. Pretty close, anyway. Would you like a jelly baby?" The stranger offered her some sweets from a paper sack. "Say, where are we?"

Laia explained about the OSIRIS, the Cylons, and the Colonies, and before too long the pair of them were good friends. The man, who called himself "the Doctor," invited her to see his ship, the TARDIS. Laia accepted.

Even her unconscious memories of the TARDIS are vague. It stood in an isolated corner of a storage compartment -- a rectangular blue box just big enough for one or two people, with the words "POLICE PUBLIC CALL BOX" stencilled across the front. But inside...

Inside, it was huge. Laia's subconscious revealed chamber after chamber after chamber, some large, some small, many unused, but all of them fascinating. Especially the bath -- a huge chamber with a jacuzzi and tropical plants -- and the main control room...

The TARDIS went somewhere; Laia has no idea where. And she doesn't know how long they were gone. She remembers numerous alien species, including one resembling oversized peppermills that rolled about repeating, "Exterminate. Exterminate," and a small robot computer the Doctor called "K-9." She also remembers planetary landscapes, some completely barren, others arctic, and still others tropical -- and one, very important, a world called "Earth."

Then, the morning after the party, Laia awoke in her own bunk. There was a bag of peculiar sweets on her pillow -- and a very long strand of multi-coloured yarn. And she was pregnant.

I've searched that part of the OSIRIS where Laia saw the TARDIS. Hades, I've

searched everywhere. My guess is no one's been in certain parts of this ship in yahrens, at least until recently. There's dust everywhere, in spite of our highly efficient air recirculation system.

In one corner of a long-empty storage chamber, there's a clean spot in the dust, a patch of deck just a few feet square. There are footprints in the dust, two sets -- one large, the footprints of a tall man, and the other small, just the size of Laia's boots. A third set of prints looks like those of a small animal, but I can't figure their connection to Laia's story.

And there's one other set of marks in the dust, on opposite sides of the large footprints. I can't say for sure, but they just might be from the ends of a very long scarf, trailing on the deck.

That's all I've learned. It's so preposterous, I don't intend to tell anyone -- not Commander Christopher, and not even Laia. In fact, I'm not even going to tell Diana about this. After all, no one really needs to know...

The father of Laia's soon-to-be-born child is no man from aboard the OSIRIS; he's not even human, although he has much in common with us. And Laia really doesn't know who he is, has no conscious memory of him. I strongly doubt, given what I've learned about the Doctor from her vague subconscious memories, that he ever realised she was pregnant, or he'd never have left her. Only...

If Commander Christopher asks me again to identify the father of Laia's child, how in Hades do I tell him the man's a wandering Time Lord from a planet in another dimension, a planet called Gallifrey?

Well, all I can say is it's going to be very interesting around here in another few days, when Laia's child is born -- yes, I know it's only been two seconds, but, after all, the father is a Time Lord. I think we're going to be in for quite a few surprises...

Not the least of them being when Dr. Senbi discovers the infant has two hearts!



"...Else?"

(By Styx Coady)

"Morgan!"

Lieutenant Morgan glanced up from the console, saw no one, and returned to his log entry. He must have imagined hearing his name called. Come to think of it, it had seemed like a voice within his imagina...

"Morgan, you turkey, over here!"

Morgan whirled to his left and saw Freya's bast crouching on a chair, tail swishing in annoyance. Her tail always swished in annoyance. But why was a bast...? Oh, that bast.

"Hello, Clem," Morgan said.

The bast responded by hissing, but Morgan, somewhere in the back of his mind, heard, "Took long enough." Clem settled into an upright position. Her tail -- Morgan always considered Clem's tail a separate entity -- curled around her forelegs and flicked periodically.

Morgan leaned forward, elbows on his knees, and smiled. "You are sentient, aren't you?"

Clem stood. "Who wants to know?" The tail soared upward, stalled, and performed an Immelmann loop.

"Hey, no offence!" Morgan leaned back again; Clem sat. "You don't have to discuss anything you don't want to."

"Damn right," said Clem.

Morgan couldn't believe his luck. Here he was, engaged in a verbal sparring match with a bast! What a unique situation! Of course, the bast's thoughts were not arranged in grammatical sentences; in fact, they were rather, well, chaotic. Weird, to be perfectly honest -- and as a scientist, Morgan was always scrupulously honest. Why, when the Commander found out about...

"Nix the Commander," said the bast.

"You read my thoughts!" Morgan cried, more delighted than alarmed. "You're not only sentient, you're telepathic!"

"Idiot!" the bast snapped. "How do you think we're talking now? You think they've got correspondence courses in conversational Caprican on Byzel? Hades, on Byzel, nobody'd be caught dead speaking that bird chatter you call a language."

Morgan regarded his furry companion. "Say what you just said in the language

of your native planet, then."

Clem jumped to the floor. "A certain degree of physical posturing is required," she explained. "PAAAAast! MrreeeeeeOWOWROWhssssss!" While exclaiming thus, Clem rose on her hind legs, fell to a low crouch, arched her back, sprang sideways, circled to the left three times, and lunged for Morgan's ankle. Then she returned to her chair. "See? A ritualised format incorporating music and dance in an aesthetically pleasing style."

Morgan was at a loss for words. For that matter, he was even at a loss for thoughts.

Clem sighed. At least, it seemed like a sigh. "You humans have so little respect for formalised beauty." She sighed again and began methodically licking a forepaw.

Relax, relax, Morgan told himself. It's just an alien culture, that's all. Besides, he thought, what do you expect from a creature perpetually in heat?

Clem sprang to attention. "Is that any way to describe a lady?" she demanded. She sat again and began washing her ears. "No self-respecting Byzellian bast would even consider not being in heat. It's a glorious tradition, full of ritual postures and exquisite mating cries." She looked at Morgan. "Would you care to hear one?"

"No, thanks."

"Ah, well, there's no accounting for philistines." Clem returned to her washing.

Morgan didn't understand the reference, but the insult was clear. He decided it was better not to take offence.

"Damn right," said the bast. "Incidentally," -- she looked again at Morgan -- "aren't your females similarly inclined?"

Morgan thought wistfully of Diana. Yeah...

"Which brings us to that report you just filed."

"Report?" asked Morgan. "About Captain Laia? You wouldn't tell anyone, would you?"

"Of course not, you're the only human on this ship I can talk to. A grim thought, that. And Laia's bastas are such primitive ninnies. No, Morgan, you're all I've got."

Morgan felt a silly satisfaction with that. "So what about the report?"

"You left out the good parts."

Morgan was confused, then he remembered the third set of prints in the dust. He started smiling. "You mean you know what happened to Captain Laia?"

"Laia? Who cares about Laia?" Morgan knew better, but he could have sworn

Clem's "voice" had a teasing pitch. "But that robot daggit, now, he was something to consider!"

A robot daggit? Oh, Lords of Kobol! Morgan started laughing. The more he pictured it, the harder he laughed. Laia, the Doctor, Earth, they could wait. But Clem and the robot...

"Come on, Clem, let's hear the details."

The bast turned coy. "Of course not! You wouldn't appreciate them. Barbarian."

"Clem..."

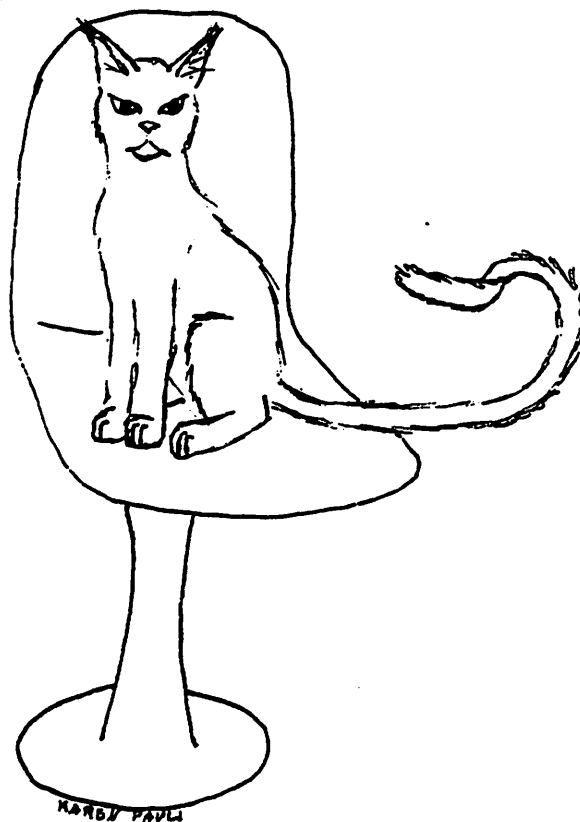
"Uh-uh, not on your life!" And with that, Clem bolted out the door and down the corridor. Morgan burst out of his chair and into the hallway, but he was too late. He caught a glimpse of the spotted bast as she turned the corner.

Then her head appeared again.

"After all," she called back to him, "I have to protect the bastlings."

Holy frak! "Clem, wait! Clem, get back here! Clem!"

It was centars before Morgan stopped pursuing the swift bast and remembered that robots are unlikely to be fertile. He resolved to get even.



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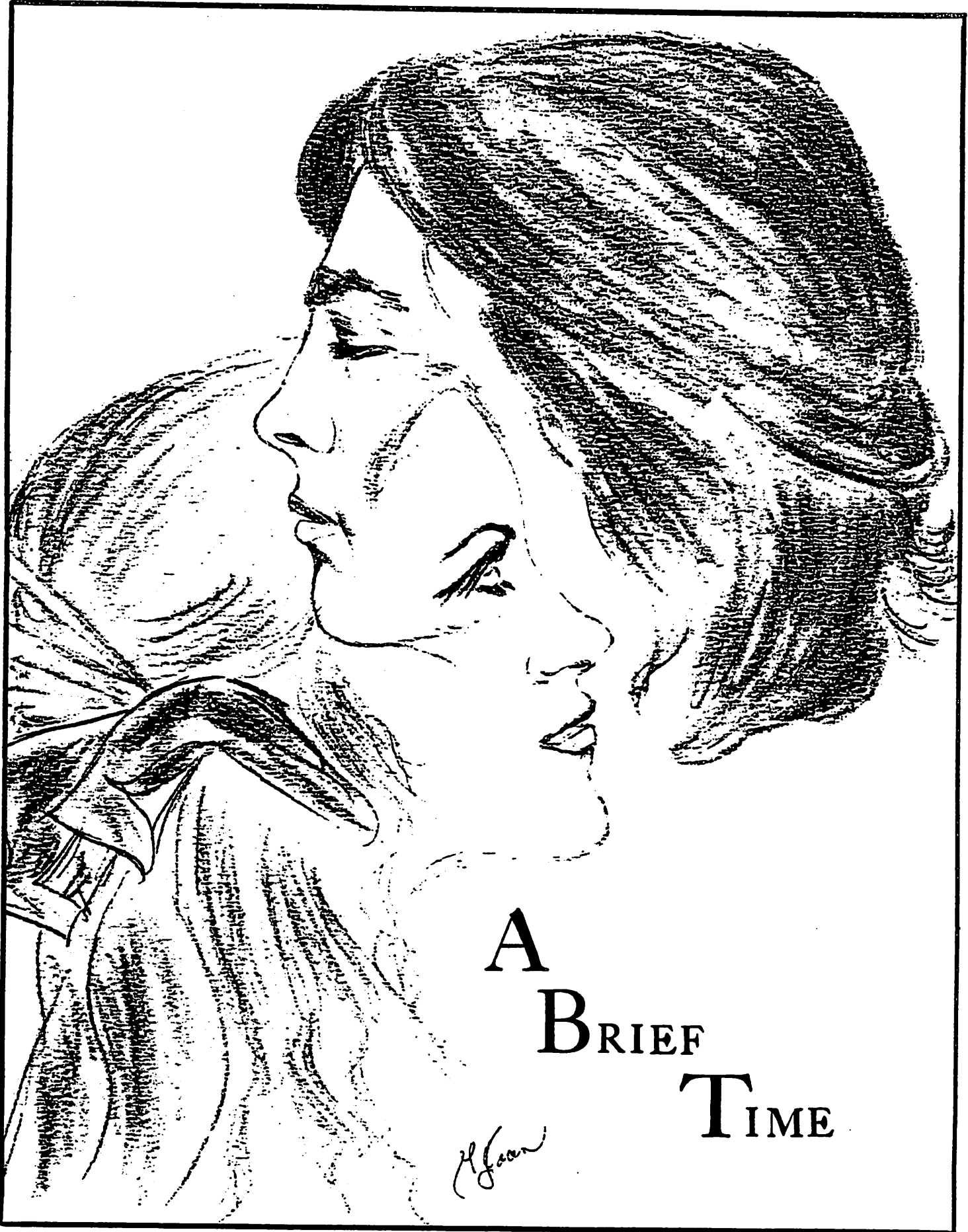
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A
BRIEF
TIME

H. G. van

Many people have conceived the mistaken idea that "Purple and Orange?" will accept only those stories that fit into our interpretation of the GALACTICA universe. As the following story, submitted to us by a talented new writer in Long Beach, California, shows, this is definitely not the case. If a story is good and fits somewhere into some interpretation of the universe Glen Larson created for the GALACTICA, we will gladly accept and print it.

And so, in some alternate universe, in which the OSIRIS does not exist...

"A Brief Time"

(By I Joan Kokolus)

Adama had already lost one son.
In his heart there was always that
unspeakable fear that one day he
would lose the other...

Initiating a planet-wide geoscan, they looked for the wreckage of a Viper.

In silence, other than the necessary communication among the pilots scanning the area, they flew into the atmosphere of the planet and began a ground search. One of the pilots pinpointed a coordinate...

The Viper was smashed almost beyond recognition. Both wings were shorn off as it skimmed the rocky range; the canopy windows were shattered; the nose looked like a crumpled accordion.

Starbuck and Boomer approached the twisted metal, hearts in their throats. Apollo could not possibly have survived.

Boomer looked up at the approaching med shuttle as he, Starbuck, and two other Viper pilots struggled to get the canopy open.

Apollo lay face-forward against the instrument panel. Most of the internal seating structure of the fighter was wrenched out of place, smashed into the fore-section. The Captain's body was wedged in tightly.

Starbuck gently removed the battered helmet, while Boomer ran a quick emergency medical check, in accordance with Warrior training. Dried blood from a wound near Apollo's left temple caked the side of his face.

Boomer looked solemnly into Starbuck's inquiring eyes. "Pretty bad, Starbuck. He's barely alive, and in deep shock."

For once, Starbuck didn't smile or make a wise-crack of any sort. He had a

very bad feeling as he watched the med shuttle touch ground. Images of all the good times, and some of the not-so-good times, he'd had with Apollo flashed through his mind.

* * * * *

In the waiting area of Life Centre aboard the GALACTICA, Dr. Salik and Dr. Paye both approached the waiting Commander Adama and his daughter Athena.

The look on Dr. Salik's face told it all. "It's one of the most serious concussions I've ever seen, Commander," he told Adama straight out. Dr. Salik was not a man of many words.

Adama straightened, visibly shaken. "Is there any hope, Doctor?" he asked, the tremor in his voice all too evident.

Dr. Salik sighed heavily. "There is always hope, Commander. You know that."

Athena put a hand on her father's arm, trying hard to blink back her rising tears. She couldn't, and turned against Adama's chest, sobbing.

* * * * *

Apollo was floating in semi-darkness. Sometimes a speck of brightness would alter that greyish realm, but then the darker spectrum would return.

He could hear sounds and movement around him, but he just could not get his eyes to open. And he didn't really understand the words spoken to him.

"It's me, Apollo. Starbuck. Remember me? I'm your best friend..."

"Son, son, I'm right here. Adama, your father..."

"And me, Apollo, your sister Athena. Come on, big brother, you have to pull out of this..."

Then there was a whacking sound, a mechanical noise. Whack! Whack!

"What's wrong with Dad, Grandfather?"

"He's sleeping, Boxey. He took a nasty roll in his Viper."

"You sure that's all?"

"Of course, Boxey. Now, you go with Cassiopeia, and let him sleep."

"Come on, Muffit. It's grown-ups and their secrets again!"

Whack! Whack!

"Oh, Dad, what'll it do to him? He's so little..."

"I don't know, Athena. Pray it never comes to that."

"Starbuck..."

"It's going to be okay, Athena. Hey, Apollo, remember that time, long, long ago, when I thought I was losing you to Serina? Well, it didn't happen, right? And it isn't going to happen now, is it, buddy?"

"I think it would be best if you all left for a while. I'd like to set up a few additional scans..."

"Sure, Doc..."

"It's Boomer, Apollo. You behave and let the doctors take care of you. We're all pitching on your side."

The noises and the shadows of the greyish realm returned, and sometimes a speck of brightness would suddenly glimmer from somewhere far away, yet near.

"Apollo? Apollo; I'm here."

Serina?

The noises and the shadows continued around Apollo. And always, in that far, yet near, place, the glimmer of brightness waited -- and called to him.

* * * * *

It had been quiet for a long time now. Every so often, the darkness of the greyish realm changed, as lighter shadows came and went, drifting around Apollo's bed. And the bright glimmer beckoned. "I'm here, Apollo, waiting."

It was very quiet in this area of the GALACTICA. The lighting was set on night simulation. All the voices that came with the shadows were gone. The one lighter shadow that never left Apollo's bedside suddenly found a reason to do so.

Through a dim haze, Apollo could just make out the slim form of a retreating nurse's uniform as he slowly opened his eyes.

"Apollo, come to me. I'll guide you now. Everyone is gone."

Apollo rose from the bed, and the glimmer of light grew brighter as it retreated through the exit. Apollo followed as it drifted gracefully through Life Centre and into the corridor.

The night simulation of the GALACTICA shadowed Apollo as he walked, light and carefree now. The light he followed chose and selected corridors, leading... Leading where? The essence of it beckoned to Apollo's heart.

Suddenly, he found himself at the base of the steps leading into the darkened Council Chamber. Apollo stopped, wonderingly, as the light he followed came to rest at a point in front of the viewport, where the vast star field shim-

mered and twinkled with the stars and dust of the universe.

"Apollo..."

The luminous entity took shape and form, solidifying, yet somehow remaining ethereal. And the shape became the image that lived in Apollo's heart. The figure was clad in a shimmering three-tiered silver gown, and strands of long wavy hair peeked out from behind the bejewelled headdress and ruffled veil. A fine necklace gleamed and sparkled at her throat, catching the light of the stars.

She held out her hand. "Apollo..."

"Serina..." Apollo stepped forward; he felt light, as if walking in a dream, or on air. He held out his hand to grasp the one reaching toward him. Their other hands clasped, so each was holding the other's opposite in a criss-cross form. "Serina, I've waited so long for you..."

Serina looked up at him, her eyes bright and luminous, and in them Apollo could see the universe. He took her in his arms, his hands crushing her veil as he held her close.

"You've convinced me," he whispered. "A spirit like yours just can't end..."

Serina smiled as her lips sought the corner of his mouth. "I just want you to know I feel very, very lucky..."

Together, they turned to face the star field, with its twinkling, beckoning stars, and just before they passed through it, something sparkled and fell away from the wedding gown.

* * * * *

It wasn't long before the alarm was sounded. Somehow, somewhere, Captain Apollo had disappeared, in that short span of time when his duty nurse left his side.

Adama, Athena, and Starbuck joined the search.

They found his body, still warm, lying on the top stair of the Council Chamber. Adama, tears streaming, knelt and cradled his dead son in his arms.

Athena turned and held tightly to a grim-faced Starbuck, before kneeling down beside her father. She ran trembling fingers over her brother's face. "How peaceful and happy he looks," she whispered, as tears welled up in her eyes and spilled down her cheeks. "So... So...serene..."

"Yes, serene..." Adama's voice echoed. "Serene..."

At that moment, Starbuck noticed something sparkling on the carpet a few metres away. Walking the few paces, he bent and picked it up. It was a necklace of finely-made decorative chain links.

Athena glanced at Starbuck as he stared at the ornament. "What is it?" she asked.

Starbuck handed it to her.

Athena inhaled sharply, recognising it. "Serina's necklace!" she exclaimed. "She wore it on her sealing day!"

All three stared at one another.

"They were sealed here, weren't they, Commander?" Starbuck asked quietly, remembering he hadn't been there.

Adama looked at the spot where Starbuck stood. "I believe, Starbuck, that I sealed them exactly in the place where you are now standing." His voice shook with emotion.

"How strange," Athena remarked, struggling with fresh tears. "Someone must've taken it from among Apollo's private things."

Adama's voice was husky as a sudden thought struck him. "No! No one took it. It was Serina. She was here!"

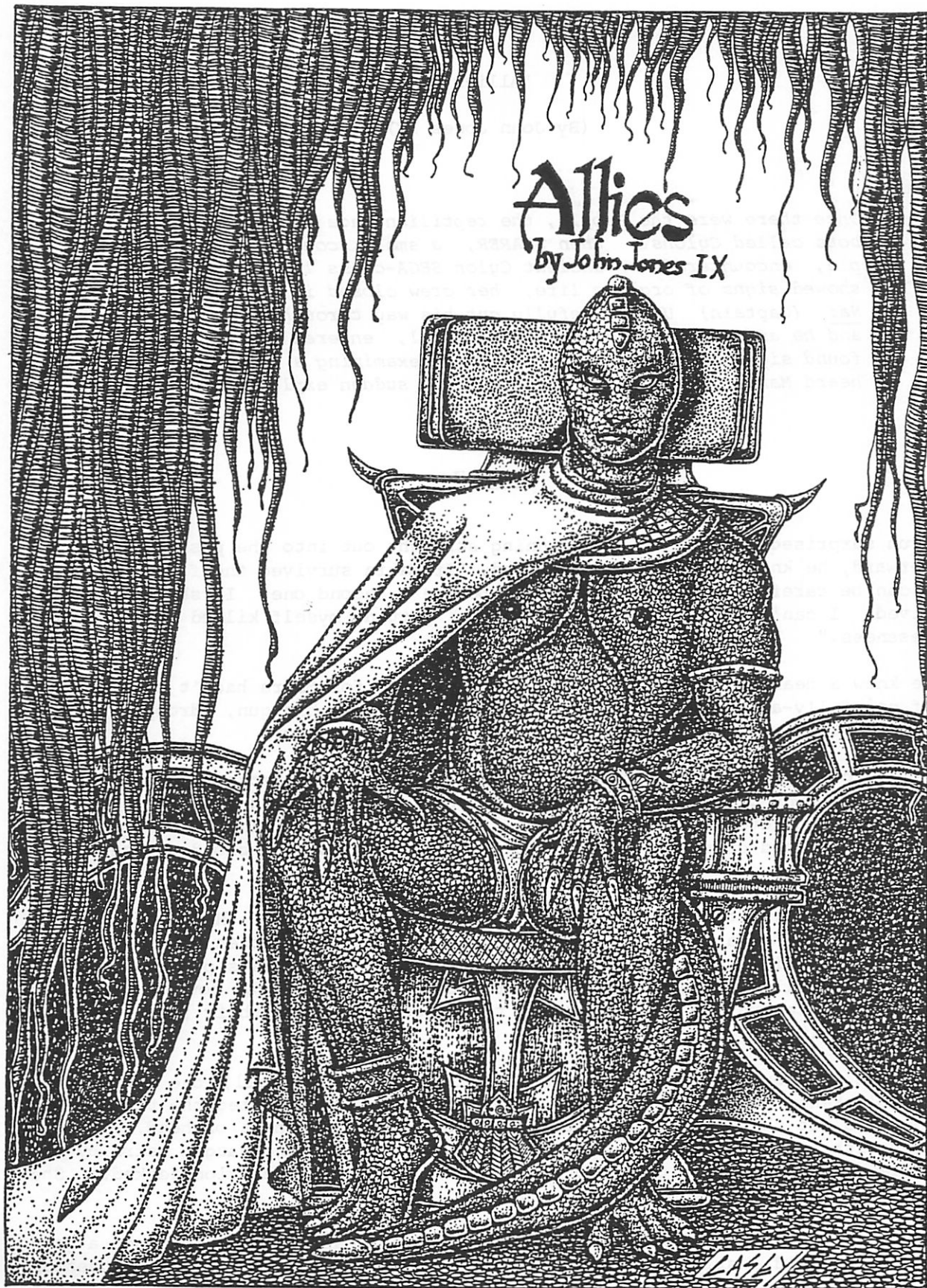
"Oh, Dad," Athena murmured, shaking her head.

Adama looked at the peaceful expression on Apollo's still, silent face, then turned to gaze at the vast star field, remembering the joyous day when he sealed them -- a binding for all eternity. His voice was stronger. "No, Athena. I know. She was here. Serina was here!"

Starbuck turned away, head bowed, still standing on the spot where he'd picked up the necklace. He was remembering something he said to Apollo back in Life Centre, not too many centars ago.

"Hey, Apollo, remember that time, long, long ago, when I thought I was losing you to Serina?"





"Allies"

(By John Jones IX)

Once there were the People, the reptilian race who created the robots called Cylons. When SHARER, a small scout ship of the People, encountered an ancient Cylon SEGA-class liner whose debris showed signs of organic life, her crew closed in to investigate. Nai (Captain) Urun carefully cut his way through an inner hatch, and he and his Technician, Makra Dakal, entered the ship. They found signs of recent combat. While examining a storeroom, Urun heard Makra cry out. Then there was a sudden explosion.

PART VI

Urun surprised himself by not running straight out into the passageway. Afterward, he knew he must have reasoned, "If Makra survived the first explosion I can be careful and still get to her before a second one. If she hasn't survived, I can't help her or avenge her by getting myself killed through carelessness."

He knew a heartbeat's relief that his new caring for Makra hadn't erased years of painfully-accumulated combat reflexes. He drew his gun, dropped into a crouch, then peered around the edge of the storeroom door.

All he could see was an eddying cloud of vomit-coloured smoke. Then a second explosion went off, smaller than the first. Makra lurched into view, backing away from whatever lay around the bend in the passage, firing as she moved. A stream of blood crept out of the smoke after her, and more blood splattered her suit.

Urun had no time to wonder how much of the blood was hers. He heard a scream and the sound of a solid slug hitting something metallic, then a hissing electrical explosion. He'd heard that kind before -- a Cylon's power cells were letting go all at once. The smoke grew thicker, Urun began coughing, and as Makra came toward him he wondered if they shouldn't close their faceplates and breathe suit air.

A Cylon staggered out of the smoke, leaning against the wall, one leg smashed and blackened just below the knee. Urun fired, but squeezed the trigger too soon and hit the Cylon in the other leg instead of its chest or head. It went down with a crash; but its arms lashed out, and one hand caught Makra by the ankle. She aimed her gun, but before she could fire the Cylon jerked. She went down with a crash on top of it.

The other arm groped for her. The Cylon had no weapons, but if it got a good grip, it could easily crush one of Makra's arms or legs like a child squeezing a rock beetle. Urun cursed; the Cylon and Makra were so tangled together that

from where he was he couldn't shoot without the risk of hitting her.

He'd taken two steps toward a better position when a tall shape stumbled out of the smoke. It held a Cylon rifle in its hands, but it was too thin to be a Cylon. The rifle muzzle dipped, a bloody hand squeezed a trigger, and a beam drilled the head of the Cylon gripping Makra. The Cylon went limp as the rifle swung toward Makra.

Before Urun could fire, Makra proved she was as fast as ever. One hand lashed out, knocking the rifle aside; the other hand gripped the barrel. Aided by her grip on the barrel and by the thrust of her tail, Makra bounced to her feet. For a moment, she and the alien stood face to face, so close they must have been smelling each other's breaths. Then Makra raised one hand toward the alien's head.

Urun knew she was going to try a touch-link with the alien's mind, to try to reassure him about the People and then learn as much as she could about his race. Urun didn't disagree with the idea. Looking from the Cylon on the deck to Makra, he realised that to the aliens, the Cylons and the People must look very much alike. If Makra did reach the alien, he might help save them from being shot by mistake.

But any sort of telepathic work required concentration and time, and Urun didn't think Makra could safely make herself that vulnerable for long enough. Smoke was still drifting down the passageway, and small explosions were still going off in the distance. The battle had died down or moved away, but it wasn't over yet.

"No, Makra," he said, stepping forward. Makra turned, the alien stiffened, and the rifle muzzle rose. Makra pushed it down again. The alien started to struggle, and Urun gently pulled the rifle out of his hands.

The alien stared wildly at Urun for a moment, dark eyes without nictitating membranes in a scaleless face framed with long dark hair caked with dirt. Then his eyes rolled up until they showed only the whites, and he collapsed so suddenly he nearly dragged Urun and Makra to the deck with him.

Makra glared at Urun. "Now see what you've done!" she hissed. She started unlocking her helmet.

For a moment, all Urun could say to the accusation was, "Me?" He knelt down, noted the blood trickling out of the alien's right sleeve, then put one audio pickup close to the alien's mouth. He was still breathing, but there was a wheezing note in his breath Urun didn't think was natural.

Urun stood up. "I didn't do anything," he said sharply. "Our friend's hurt. That's why he fainted."

"Then it's all the more important I should reach him," said Makra. "Otherwise, how are we going to know what's wrong with him and how to help?"

"Makra, you aren't going to try reaching anybody until the fighting's over! I can't look in every direction at once while you're lost in an alien's mind."

"I wasn't planning to go in deep," she replied. "Besides, the fighting seems

over."

It was true that the smoke was thinning out, and the battle sounds were now only a faint vibration through the deck. Urun hoped she was right, but wasn't going to wager much on hopes. He'd lost too many friends that way, back in his early days in the Scouts, before he learned to be cynical and pessimistic.

"The fighting seems to be dying away around here," Urun corrected her. "That doesn't mean it's over everywhere in the ship."

"There can't be that many Cylons or aliens, surely."

"We don't know. If the Cylons kept a second and third crew in storage, there could be two or three hundred of them. Certainly there must be at least a few dozen aliens, or they'd have been fools to try taking the ship. They don't seem like fools to me."

"No, but we can't be sure. We can't be sure about anything, unless I go into one of their minds, at least a little."

Urun stood up, flicking his tail. Both he and Makra could be right, depending on whether it was more important to stay on guard or to start learning about the aliens. He looked down at the alien again. One thing seemed nearly certain -- the creature was hurt badly enough that if they just moved on now, they might be leaving him to die. Urun opened the pouch that held the medical kit, unsealed it, and knelt again.

"I'll do what I can to help him. If there's no fighting around here when I'm through, you can try to read him."

"Shouldn't I try to find out something about his physiology before you start work?"

Urun shrugged. "I don't think you could learn enough to let me treat internal injuries, even if we had the equipment. I can stop bleeding and immobilise fractures simply by eye."

"True." She moved to a position where she had a reasonably good view in both directions along the passageway. As an afterthought, she pulled the storeroom door shut. Urun started cutting the alien out of his clothing.

The clothing was of some synthetic material, and either very light or worn thin. Urun could penetrate it with a light thrust of his claws, and tear it almost as easily as paper. He wondered at beings whose skin was so thin and unprotected not wearing heavier clothes. Then it occurred to him that perhaps this was what the Cylons issued them. The Cylons knew only as much about organic life forms as would help them in battle; in their wars with the People, they seldom took prisoners at all and never held them long.

The alien's injuries above the waist seemed limited to a cut in the upper arm, apparently an old injury reopened by his movements in battle, and heavy bruising on the ribcage. Urun listened to the alien's breathing again, still heard the wheezing, but also heard both lungs steadily at work. If there were any broken ribs, at least they hadn't punctured the lungs.

Strapping with bandages would probably be enough, as long as the alien didn't have to be moved. The damage would probably have been worse except for two bulges of flesh over the ribs, which must have provided padding against the blows. Urun also bandaged the arm wound, rather than use a sealer-coagulant which might react against the alien's body chemistry. He was wiping his hands on the lower garments of the alien when he heard Makra gasp.

He knew that if what made her gasp was Cylons, she'd probably have fired, and it was certainly too late to do anything else now, anyway. So he raised his hands until they were well clear of his body, then spread them out to show they were empty. Slowly, he stood up and turned around. As he did, he realised that perhaps the aliens wouldn't consider the spread-fingers gesture peaceful, since it also extended his claws. However, he couldn't help the limitations of his anatomy any more than the aliens could help theirs.

As he'd expected, it was a trifle too late for any fight that wouldn't be suicidal. Three of the aliens stood over the People with drawn Cylon guns, two in the passageway and one in the doorway of the storeroom.

There must be another entrance to it, Urun thought pointlessly. He somehow felt that considering useless details could erase the sting of being caught by surprise. If the aliens had been in the mood to shoot first and ask questions afterward, he and Makra would have been dead, and without the excuse of her being absorbed in reaching into the alien's mind! Urun felt positively foolish, which was no doubt better than feeling dead, but still not the best frame of mind for dealing with the aliens. He started the breathing exercises from the T'Lit meditations, which always calmed him and would be hard for even the most nervous alien to mistake for a hostile move.

Then Makra put down her gun, unfastened her gloves, dropped them to the floor, and sat down in her concentration pose, tail straight out behind her at an improbable angle to the rest of her body, knees up in front of her, and hands crossed on her lap. The aliens looked from her to each other, then one of them bent over and picked up the gun. Another alien pointed at Urun, then at his gun. He sighed and held it out by its barrel to the alien, who shoved it into his belt.

A moment later, Urun began to sense a feeling of warmth and calmness much stronger than he could have gotten from the T'Lit exercises even if he'd finished them. He knew what it was -- Makra, exercising her special talent for radiating emotions. She seldom did it aboard SHARER, because it involved invading the privacy of fellow crewmembers, but he'd seen her control drunks and once even a violently insane soldier with it at planetside bases. She had all the strength needed; Urun only hoped the aliens would understand what she was trying to do and respond as she hoped they would.

The emotions gave way to more specific pictures -- SHARER in orbit around Dulanadan, her last planetfall; the Canyon of Jumjaga; a nest-cave with two children so young their tails were only partly grown...

Urun straightened so suddenly that two of the aliens raised their guns. Both of the children has his features, were almost younger editions of himself! Makra was showing him an image of their children -- and also showing it to the aliens! For a moment, he was as angry as if he'd been forced to have sex in their presence; then he quickly shut off that thought because of the pictures

it formed in his mind. When Makra was working with telepathy, she could receive the thoughts of others as well as send hers...

Makra never seemed to notice Urun's lapse. She kept running pictures past the inner eyes of her audience, until suddenly one of the aliens put his gun on the deck and knelt down within reach of her. She raised both hands and pressed one to each of his temples. He stiffened, and Urun saw the pads of flesh on his chest rising and falling rapidly from the quick breathing of fear or excitement. But he controlled himself admirably, and knelt while Makra sent her message. A message sent through touch couldn't be heard by anyone else, but Urun knew it must have included instructions on how to reply.

The alien raised his hands to Makra's temples and held them there so long that Urun had to struggle not to fidget. The alien was sweating and pale by the time he lowered his hands and let Makra stand up, and Makra herself looked unsteady on her legs. Apparently the aliens had only limited telepathic abilities, and communicating with a weak telepath without any chance at all to train or prepare him was always an ordeal.

Makra scratched her crest with the claws of both hands, her favourite gesture when she was unsure what to say, then turned to Urun. "Most of this is a guess. But..."

"I know. We can't stand here forever, even if the aliens would let us." He'd felt the vibrations in the deck increasing -- the battle was either coming closer or flaring up again, perhaps both.

"These...beings...are prisoners of the Cylons. The SEGA-liner is a Cylon exploration ship. It captured the aliens' ship several years ago and was returning to Cylon space. When the prisoners learned this, they planned to take the ship. When we fought the Cylons, they knew this was their best chance, so they struck.

"Because they know we're enemies of the Cylons and saw us trying to help one of their wounded, they trust us somewhat. They have a telepath among them, but he is in the part of the ship still held by the Cylons. If we will help in the fight until the Cylons are all dead, they will lead us to the telepath. Then he and I can communicate freely."

That left a good many questions unanswered, including what would happen then. Urun knew better than most that simply "communicating" did not create understanding, much less peace or cooperation. Still, it was as much as he and Makra could reasonably expect from beings engaged in a desperate fight, who would not have been completely unjust if they'd shot down anything which looked like a Cylon the moment it appeared.

He nodded. "Tell them to give us back our guns, and we'll follow where they lead."

It took longer than Urun liked for Makra to get that message across, and finally she gave up and did the job with gestures. By then, the smoke was coming down the passageway again, as well as puffing out of the storeroom, and all three aliens were looking as if they expected Cylons to jump out of the walls and ceiling at them any moment.

There was a further delay while the aliens hid their wounded comrade behind a pile of gear in the storeroom. Then they gave the People back their guns, and the oddly-assorted squad started off in search of the battle. An alien led, then came Makra, another alien, Urun, and the last alien. This made sure that one of the aliens, with his superior knowledge of the ship, was leading. At the same time, both of the People had someone behind them at all times. It was just the way Urun would have done it himself.

He also remembered how the aliens had been able to surprise him and Makra. This race knew war. Of course, they would still be strange and difficult allies, unable to speak a word of the People's language. But -- and this thought made Urun stop so suddenly that the alien behind nearly ran into him -- they were allies.

For the first time in all the centuries of the Cylon wars, someone would be helping the People in a battle against their monstrous creations.

For the first time in all those centuries, the People were not alone.

(To be continued.)



COLONIAL CONCLAVE

With the approval of the 1981 convention committee, a Colonial Conclave will be held as a part of this year's Windycon.

The Conclave will be organized and run by OSIRIS Publications and "Purple and Orange?" -- the BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* fanzine. We plan on providing some of our own programming and hopefully will be able to show BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* videotapes in our own small programming room, as well as holding panels and a trivia contest. Suggestions and volunteers for the panels are encouraged. Anyone willing to provide videocassettes and/or a videocassette recorder, please contact us.

This year, Chicago's annual Windycon will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago on the weekend of December 18-20. Room rates and other convention information will be available soon. Write to Windycon (P. O. Box 2572, Chicago, Illinois 60690) for information, or send a self-addressed stamped envelope for Conclave information to:

Colonial Conclave
c/o OSIRIS Publications
8928 North Olcott Avenue
Morton Grove, Illinois 60053

OSIRIS Publications will also host a "Colonial Festivity" during Windycon, just as we will be hosting other such affairs at conventions around the country this year.

Watch for further information.

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EDITORIAL: A STAR (?) IS BORN

This issue marks both the second anniversary of "Purple and Orange?" and the official birth of OSIRIS Publications, which in the future will be responsible for the fanzine and all other related materials. These include "Purple and Orange?" special issues (such as "Apollo's Odyssey," released in April), an annual BATTLESTAR GALACTICA calendar, and a series of humorous Shakespearean-style plays concerning the battlestar BLASTICA (the first of which will be available later this year). For the most part, special publications appearing under the OSIRIS logo will be printed in a slightly different format (no right-justified margins, please!) but will be of the same high quality as "Purple and Orange?" itself.

Writers of GALACTICA-universe novels, novellas, or novelettes are herewith invited to submit their stories to OSIRIS Publications. If accepted, the story will be assigned an editor, who will work with the writer to prepare the manuscript for the earliest possible publication. "Apollo's Odyssey" was only the first. Currently in process are "The Battle of Molukai" by Sharon Monroe and "Flight of the Phoenix" by Barbara Fister-Liltz.

Our 1982 GALACTICA calendar is now in the planning stages, slated for publication in early October 1981. Any artists desiring to have work appear in this calendar should contact us as soon as possible. The deadline for all calendar art is 15 August 1981. There will be no extensions of this date.

Now, just what is all this about OSIRIS Publications? Well, in a way, it's your fault. It seems fans of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA -- and readers of "Purple and Orange?" -- are far more numerous than we could have guessed two short years ago, when two of us decided on a "one-shot fanzine" to try to persuade ABC-TV to change their minds about cancelling the series. So...

But OSIRIS Publications really owes its beginnings to a very small number of people:

Leah Bestler, who had the idea for a fanzine in the first place...

Lisa Golladay, a professionally-trained editor who joined our staff very much against her wishes ("YOU WILL EDIT...")...

David Morgan, who is an inspiration in himself...

Sharon Monroe, in far-away St. Paul, Minnesota, who has quickly become a mainstay of our writing staff -- and don't be surprised if she turns pro one day...

"John Jones IX," who is a pro, and a very dear friend, and who keeps encouraging us to try our own professional writing -- and who keeps giving us "Allies" in bits and pieces...

Anne Cecil, of Dayton, Ohio, who started out with a couple of sonnets, wrote us a "blue" story -- and suddenly became both writer

and typist. Without her -- and without "Black Nova" and "Sexy Remy," our two matched Remington Rand element typewriters -- we could never have considered being anything more than a fanzine...

Mary Jean Holmes, an artist who's wonderful even when she's ill...

Frank Liltz, who designs such magnificent logos...

And Barbara Fister-Liltz, Frank's wife, a great artist whose enthusiasm is (if nothing else) highly contagious...

And last -- but never least -- Frank Prohaska, who makes it all happen.

These ten -- excuse us, twelve (mustn't forget the Remingtons!) -- deserve all the praise we can give. We couldn't do any of it without them.

And you, our readers, too. You're a great bunch, and without you, we'd have no reason to exist. If you've come to love us, be assured we love you, too. And we want to meet you, as many of you as possible.

And so was born the Colonial Conclave, to be held as a part of this year's Windycon in Chicago the weekend of December 18-20. The Conclave will be a place to meet, to get acquainted, to visit, exchange ideas, and learn about one another. There will be panels, discussions, trivia, and (hopefully) videotapes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA (and other media SF) episodes. It will, in essence, be a mini-convention within a convention. We'll have more information on it in our next issue, available around Labor Day.

See you then -- and in person, at the Conclave!

Joy Harrison
Senior Editor

IN MEMORIAM

F L I C K A

BORN 1968 ----- DIED 1981

SHE WAS MUCH LOVED, AND IS -- AND ALWAYS WILL BE -- MUCH MISSED, MOURNED BY ALL WHO KNEW HER. SHE WAS GOOD AND SWEET AND GENTLE, BEAUTIFUL AND AFFECTIONATE. BUT THE "DIRE WOLF" LIVES ON ABOARD THE OSIRIS, AND THE REAL FLICKA WILL LIVE FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS.

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